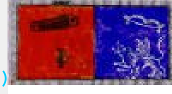


THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MITHILA- RADHAKRISHNA CHOUDHARY (Courtesy- PRABHAT KUMAR CHOUDHARY)

The Political and Cultural Heritage of Mithila by Radhakrishna Choudhary

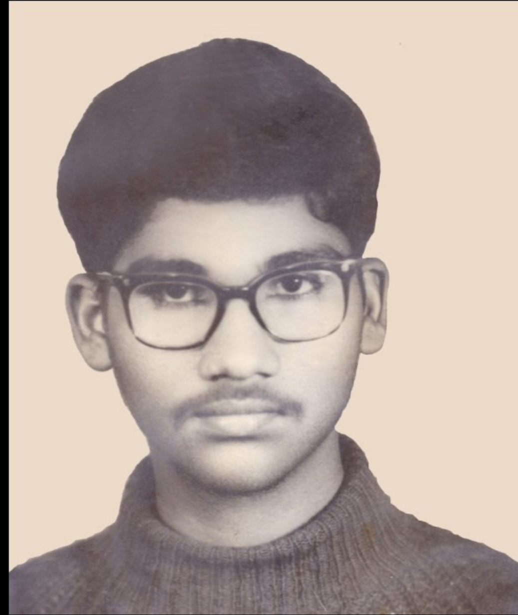
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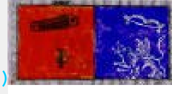


TO MY SECOND SON

PRASHANT KUMAR CHOUDHARY

23. 12. 1950 – 04. 05. 1976







LATE RADHAKRISHNA CHOUDHARY (15. O2. 1921 – 15. 03. 1985)

ABBREVIATIONS

1. ABORI – Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

2. AGI – Ancient Geography of India by Sir Alexander Cunningham.

3. Ait.Ar. – Aiteraya Aranyaka.

4. AJV – Sir Ashutosh Mukherji Silver Jubilee Volume (3 Vols.). Vol. III – Orientalia-Cal. University.

5. ASIAR – Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India.

6. BG – Bombay Gazetteer.

7. Bhandarkar – List: A List of Inscriptions of Northern India.

(Appendix to Epigraphica Indica, Vols. XIX-XXIII)

8. BI – Banglar Itihasa (in Bengali): R D Banerji.

9. Bibl.Ind. – Bibliotheca Indica: Published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcatta (also BI).

10. BSOAS – Bulletin of the School of the Oriental and African Studies, London.

11. BTA – Bihar Through the Ages (ed. By R R Diwakar).

12. Buston – History of Buddhism by Buston (Tr. By E Obermiller), Heidelberg, 1932.

13. Cat. – Catalogue.

14. CHI – Cambridge History of India.

15. CHB – Comprehensive History of Bihar, published by the K P Jaiswal Institute, Patna.

16. CHB – History of Bihar by R K Choudhary.

17. CII – Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.

18. CP – Copperplate.

19. CIB – Select Inscriptions of Bihar by R K Choudhary.

20. DKM – Decline of the Kingdom of Magadh by B P Sinha.

21. DHNI – Dynastic History of Northern India by H C Ray.

22. Dharmaswamin – History of Dharmaswamin (Deciphered & Translated by Dr G Roerich, Patna, 1959).

23. DUS – Dacca University Studies.

24. EC – Epigraphia Carnatica.

25. EHB – Early History of Bengal by F J Monahan.

26. EHBP – The Early History of Bengal, P L Paul, Calcutta, 1939.

27. EHI – Early History of India by V A Smith.

28. EI – Epigraphia India.

29. G D College Bulletin Series, No. I.

30. GL – Gaudalekhamala (in Bengali) by Aksaya Kumar Maitreya.

31. GOS – Gaekwad Oriental Series.

32. GR – Gaudarajamala (in Bengali) by R P Chanda.

33. HB – History of Bengal published by Dacca University.

34. HAB – History of Ancient Bengal by R C Majumdar (also abbreviated as RCM).

35. HAIB – Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal by B I Sen.

36. HCIP – The History and Culture of the Indian People, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay.

37. IA – Indian Antiquary.

38. IF – Indian Feudalism by R S Sharma.

39. IB – Inscriptions of Bengal.

40. IC – Indian Culture.

41. IHQ – Indian Historical Quarterly.

42. JA – Journale Asiatique.

43. JAIH – Journal of Ancient Indian History, Calcutta.

44. JAHRS – Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, Rajahmundry.

45. JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society, New Haven.

46. JAS – Journal of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

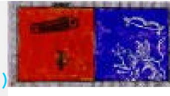
47. JASB – Journal of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

48. JBORS – Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Patna.

49. JBRS – Journal of the Bihar Research Society, Patna.

50. JBBRAS – Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay.

51. JBTS – Journal of the Buddhist Text Society, London.



52. JGIS – Journal of the Greater India Society, Calcutta.

53. JIH – Journal of Indian History, Madras and Travancore.

54. JISOA – Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta.

55. JL – Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta University.

56. JOR – Journal of Oriental Research, Madras.

57. JRAS – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London.

58. JRASBL – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters, Calcutta.

59. Levi – Nepal, Le Nepal by Sylvain Levi.

60. MASB – Memoirs of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

61. MSS – Manuscript.

62. Mitra – Nepal: Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal by Rajendra Lal Mitra, Calcutta.

63. Mitra – Notices: Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts by Rajendra Lal Mitra.

64. Morrison – Political Centres and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal by Barrie M Morrison, Bombay.

65. NIA – New Indian Antiquary.

66. Pag Sam Jon Zang by Sumpa (ed. By Sarat Chandra Das, Calcutta, 1908).

67. PP – Purusapariksa by Vidyapati.

68. PB – Palas of Bengal by R D Banerji.

69. PIHC – Proceedings of Indian History Congress.

70. PASB – Proceedings of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

71. PTOC – Proceedings and Transactions of the All India Oriental Congress.

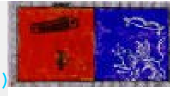
72. QJMS – Quarterly Journal of the Mythical Society.

73. RR – Rajniti Ratnakar by Chandeswara.

74. RC – Ram Charita by Sandhyakar Nandi.

75. SERMPEI – Some Epigraphical Records of the Medieval Period from Eastern India by D C Sirkar, New Delhi, 1979.

76. SMK – Mithila Under the Karnatas by C P N Sinha.



77. ST – History of Tirhut by S N Singh.

78. TM – History of Mithila by Upendra Thakur.

79. TN – Tabaqat-i-Nasri by Minhaj.

80. VJI – Vanga Jatir Itihasa by N N Basu.

81. VR – Varnaratnakara by Jyotiriswara Thakur.

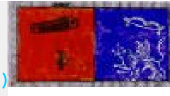
CHAPTER I

SOURCES

For the period following the overthrow of the Mouryans, the **Gargi-Samhita**, the **Mahabhasya** of Patanjali, the **Divyavadana**, the **Malavikagnimitram** of Kalidas, the **Puranas** and the **Harsacharita** of Bana supply us with important and interesting details. Since the epigraphic and numismatic sources are altogether lacking, it is difficult to weave these stray items of information into a continuous narrative and even if we do so, we cannot claim any finality. The investigation of various ancient sites in North Bihar may, no doubt, some day throw light on the contemporary history of the countries lying tot he north and east of Kosambi, viz., Kosala, Videha, Kasi, Magadha, Anga and Pundra which included a portion of ancient Purnea in North Bihar. Like the Mallas, Lichchavis and the Videhas, the Pundras were a people and Patanjali mentions them. The Puranas place them along with the Angas, Vangas and Suhmas.[1] According to the **Divyavadana**, Pundravardhana was an eastern city of Asoka.[2] Bhima is said to have led an expedition against the Paundra king after his conquest of Munger.[3] Between this country and Vanga lay the Kausikikachcha. Pundras and Paundras are separately mentioned in the **Bhismaparva** of the **Mahabharata**.[4] Bharat in his **Natyasastra**[5] combines Pundras with Naipalikas. On an interpretation of a gloss in Patanjali's **Mahabhasya**, D R Bhandarkar holds that even in the Sunga period, Brahmanical culture and worship did not sufficiently spread in the Anga country.[6] A portion of Anga also lay in North Bihar and was known as Anguttarapa in the Buddhist period.[7] In between Anga and Videha, there existed a place known as Kalavana.[8]

I

The present available archaeological and other allied evidence are not sufficient to enable us to determine whether the kingdoms in these countries were still united under one sovereign, as in the time of Asoka or whether they had become independent. The true picture of North Bihar cannot be successfully presented in the existing state of our knowledge. Hence we have to be contented with the meagre sources at our disposal until more definite evidence can be discovered. Stray finds of the Sunga, Kusana and post-Kusana periods have been discovered from a number of sites in North Bihar. On the bank of the Gandak at Sonepur, near Kali temple, there is a Sunga railing made of Chunar sandstone.[9] A fine Sunga terracotta has been discovered from Naulagarh and Jaimanglagarh.[10] A post-Sunga and a Gupta terracotta have been discovered from Jaimanglagarh.[11] The remnants of some wooden palisades (second discovery in Bihar after Pataliputra) in a tank, recently dug out at Jaimanglagarh, indicates the existence of a bridge connecting the rampart and the moat and this is, in a sense, a unique discovery in Indian archaeology.[12] Since the above mentioned post-Sunga terracotta has been discovered from the said tank at Jaimanglagarh, we may ascribe it to the Sunga or the post-Sunga period. Relics of the Sunga-Kanva, Kusana, Saka, Andhra and other dynasties have been discovered from Vaisali. Seven copper Kusana coins, two Indo-Scythic and one Indo-Greek coins are in the collection of the Chandradhari Mithila Museum, Darbhanga. Pieces of grey ware pottery have also been found in large numbers from the above mentioned sites. Punch-marked coins have been discovered from Purnea, Gorhodih (Bangaon-Mahisi), Patuaha, Bahera, Naulagarh, Jaimanglagarh, Vaisali, Mangalgarh, Manjhi, Darbhanga and a number of other places in North Bihar. Northern black polished wares and grey wares are common.[13] It is on the basis of these meagre sources that we can weave out a narrative of the political history of North Bihar for the period under review.

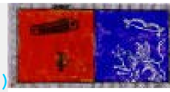


II

The history of Mithila from 550 to 1200 AD is enveloped in obscurity and nothing tangible is known about the actual state of affairs in a country so much renowned all over the world for its intellectual and cultural activities. Stray references are found there about certain names and places but no attempt has yet been made to piece together all those scattered knowledge and give them a concrete shape. Unfortunately for us we have neither Bana's **Harsacharita** nor Kalhana's **Rajatarangini** so far as this region is concerned. We are hopelessly disappointed when we search for other sources as numismatic or epigraphic. Various **MSS** discovered from Nepal contain indirect references to this period. The newly discovered copper plate inscription of Jivitagupta and some other new inscriptions discovered by Sohoni, the Dighwa-Dubauli plate, the Imadpur image inscriptions, the Naulagarh inscriptions, the Nagadah terracotta plaque, the Bangaon copper plate and the Panchobh copper plate and a coin of Vigrahapala III from Naulagarh are some of the important source materials brought to light so far (CIB – for inscriptions). The **Yasastilaka** of Somadeva, **Ramacharita** of Sandhyakara Nandi, **Mudita-Kuvalayaswa**, **Ballala-Charita**, **Vikramankadevacharita**, **Saduktikarnamrta** of Sridharadasa, the **Panji** records, the **Prakrta-paingalam**, **Krtya-Kalpataru** of **Laksmidhara**, **Lingavartika** of Jayasimha, **Kavyaprakas-viveka** of Sridhara Thakur, **Purusapariksa** of Vidyapati, **Chandogya-parisista** of Narayan, **Linganusasana** of Vaman, writings of Chandeswara, **Varnanaratnakara** of Jyotiriswara, **Parijataharananataka** of Umapati, the diary of Mulla Taquia and other literature preserved in the handwritten palm-leaf and paper **MSS** of Mithila are some of the important literary sources. The accounts of Fahien, Hiuentsang, Itsing, Dharmaswami and other foreign travellers throw some light on the history of North Bihar during the period under review. Some colophons of the **MSS** of Mithila and Nepal do throw welcome light on the political history of North Bihar. The Nepalese inscriptions and the various texts of the royal **Vamsavalis** also help us in reconstructing the history of this period. Compared with other parts of Bihar, the sources for the study of this period for our region are meagre.

For a study of the period under review we have no authentic sources at our disposal. We have neither a Megasthenes, a Fahien or a Hiuentsang, nor have even a Kalhana to give us an account of the Karnatas of Mithila. There are only few inscriptions and some colophons of the **MSS**. The local scholars serving under various monarchs of the dynasty have left the names of some of their masters in their colophons. The **Purusapariksa** of Vidyapati preserve some traditional account in the form of stories, etc. or contemporary writers refer to their masters in their colophons. Sometimes they are so confusing that it becomes difficult to make out a substantial case for scientific study. The following **MSS** enable us to reconstruct some problems of the history of Mithila.

- **Bhattikavyatika** by Srinivas (ASB MSS No. G – 4795).
- **Krtyakalpatara** by Laksmidhara (DO – No. G – 4741).
- **Muditakavalayasya** of the Nepal Durbar Library.
- **Anargharaghavatika** written during the reign of Ramasimhadeva.



- The four volumes of the Catalogue of **Mithila MSS**, published by the Bihar Research Society, also provide us with some clue to the understanding of our history. **Prakrta-painglam** throws some interesting sidelight on the contemporary history of Mithila. We get a good account of the invasion of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq in a Persian **MSS**, **Basatinuluns**, now preserved in the British Museum. The biography of Dharmaswami throws an interesting sidelight on the history of the Karnatas of Mithila and specifically about the reign of Ramasimhadeva.

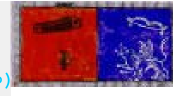
Besides these literary and other sources, we have a few inscriptions of the time of Nanyadeva, Malladeva, Nrsimha or Narasimhadeva and an Arabic inscription of the time of Ruknuddin Kai'kaus (dated 1291 AD) discovered by me. The evidences, culled from the Nepalese inscriptions and **MSS** of he contemporary and later rulers, give us a good account of the Karnatas of Mithila. The Nepal **Vamsavalis** are important for the study of our period. The works of Chandeswara enable us not only to reconstruct the political history but also the cultural and administrative history of the period. Archaeological sources for the present are practically nil. Hence in the absence of any coherent sources we have to be critical in tapping these extant literary and other sources which are more traditional in nature. We have to be cautious in handling these sources.

III

THE PRAKRTA-PAINGLAM: AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF MITHILA'S POLITICAL HISTORY

The Prakrta-painglam[14] (**PPm**) written in the 14th century AD throws interesting sidelights on the political history of Mithila and in that sense this work supplements another contemporary source for the study of India's political history, viz, the Purusapariksa (**PP**) of Vidyapati.[15] Neither of these works has yet been studied properly from the historical point of view. An attempt is made here to study such passages of the **Ppm** that have a bearing on the history of Mithila, and are supported by other contemporary evidence.

The Kalachuri king Karna and his son Yasah-Karna are frequently mentioned in the **PPm**. Yasah-Karna is said to have led two campaigns against Champaran after defeating the Kasiraja (1073 AD).[16] Karna's expedition in North Bihar is an established fact. The statement stands substantiated from the Bheraghat inscription of Alhanadevi, wherein it is stated that Yasah-Karna, having broken the Gahadawala barrier at Kasi, reached Champaran and devastated it.[17]Some portions of North Bihar seem to have been the centre of a struggle for supremacy between the Kalachuris, the Gahadawalas, the Palas and the Karnatas. The Kahala inscription of Sodhadeva of the Kalachuri dynasty (VS 1135/1079 AD) indicates that he had declared himself independent in the Gorakhpur region. He granted various pieces of land in the Gunakala-Visaya. His kingdom included Gorakhpur in U P and Saran in North Bihar.[18] On the authority of the Bangaon Copper Plate Inscription[19] and Naulagarh Inscription[20] of Vigrahapala III, we have to reconcile his rule with the Kalachuri expansion in North Bihar. According to **Ramacharita**[21], Vigrahapala defeated Karna and married his daughter Yauvanasri. The above evidences suggest that he pushed back the Kalachuri king Karna and stabilised the Pala authority in Mithila. The latter's son Yasah-Karna (1072-1125 AD) attempted at the restoration of the Kalachuri authority in North Bihar but without any positive success. The Bheraghat Inscription simply refers to the devastation of Camparanya.[22]There is no



reference about the actual occupation of this region even in the **PPm**. Viewed in the background of the epigraphic evidence, we can say that the **PPm** has maintained the tradition faithfully. Jayaswal suggested that the event took place during the reign of Nanyadeva; this is impossible in view of the fact that it does not fit in chronologically. Yasah-Karna could not succeed in establishing his hold over the region, for we find that by 1124 AD he had returned from Banaras and by that time Nanyadeva had attained full glory.[23]

From the **PPm** we learn that the king of Kasi fought successfully with the kings of Gauda, Vanga, Kalinga, Telangana, Maharastra, Saurastra, Camparanya, Nepal, Bhota, Cina and Lohavara.[24] This king of Kasi must have belonged to the Gahadawala dynasty as is evident from the **PPm**. We shall revert to this point later. The reference to the Darad-Gandaki-Desa in the Lucknow Museum Plate of Kirtipaladeva[25] (VS 1167/1111 AD) clearly shows that the Gahadawala kingdom lay contiguous to the Karnata kingdom of Mithila bordering on the Gandaka. Since the Karnatas were ruling in the region of Motihari, i.e. Simraongarh (their capital, now in the Nepalese territory), they were the immediate neighbours of the Gahadawalas. The possibility of a clash between these two dynasties cannot be precluded in the present state of our knowledge and in the face of the evidence of the **PPm**, the composer of which may have had access to a better source now lost to us. It has been suggested that Govindachandra Gahadawala came into conflict with the Palas, the Senas, the Gangas, the Kakatiyas, the Chalukyas, the Muslims and the Karnatas of Mithila.[26] The ruler of Kasi has been extolled in a number of verses in the **PPm**. One of these verses advises the ruler of Gauda to retire, for no power could withstand the shower of arrows from Kasisa's bow. When the ruler of Kasi went on expedition, the ruler of Gauda was advised to retire with his tired elephants, the Vangas were frightened into submission, the Kalingas were vanquished, the Tailangas fled from the field, the Marathas ran on all sides, the Saurastras fled out of fear, the people of Camparanya trembled and tried to escape to the hills and getting up and falling back again and again gave up the ghost.[27] He is said to have defeated Nepal[28], Bhota, Cina, Malwa and Telanga.[29] Needless to say that the reference to Nepal, Cina and Tibet is an exaggeration.

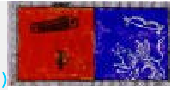
The reference with regard to Champaran is interesting. Here we are told that the people trembled, escaped and tried to get up, but it does not speak of complete victory. Since the Karnatas were ruling, it may be assumed that the expeditions, like the earlier ones, were more like plundering raids without actual occupation. The close proximity of Motihari to Gorakhpur might have encouraged the Gahadawalas to make a bid for supremacy in Champaran and after that in Nepal. The passage in question makes a reference to the Gahadawala minister Vidyadhara and as such the identification of the king of Gahadawala is plausible. The statement that the 'people of Camparanya escaped to the hills' is important if we view it in the background of the history of Mithila. Prior to Nanyadeva, Motihari or Champaran had been subjected to invasions from the west and the Karnatas had, therefore, to take special protection against future invasions. Keeping in view these sporadic but frequent attacks, the Karnatas should have selected Simraongarh and made it their permanent capital. The so-called 'escape' to the hills is an indication of the fact that they shifted to the new capital of the Karnatas, now located at Simraongarh. The Karnatas had their capital formerly at Nanpur in the district of Darbhanga but the shifting of the capital to Simraongarh was possibly the direct result of the western incursions into the territory of Champaran. Simraongarh was also centrally situated, for Nanyadeva had established his

authority in Nepal too. It might also be noted that Champaran and Nepal have been mentioned together in the **PPm**.

Now let us examine who this Kasiraja was? Kasisa[30], Kasisara[31], and Kasiraa[32] are frequently mentioned in the **PPm**. All these verses of the **PPm** extol highly a ruler of Kasi. Vidyadhara[33], the excellent minister of Kasiraja, is also mentioned. His name helps us to identify the king of Kasi. A recent writer has identified this king with Govindachandra Gahadawala.[34] On the basis of the Gahadawala inscription, we learn that Govindachandra extended his sway up to Munger on the south of the Ganges. There is no epigraphic reference to support the Gahadawala expansion in Mithila or North Bihar[35], nor the reference to the Darada-Gandaki-Desa (referred to above) imply any Gahadawala territory in this part of our state. In view of these facts and of the explicit mention of Vidyadhara in the **PPm**, it is not historically correct to identify Kasisa with Govindachandra Gahadawala. Vidyadhara was the minister of Jayachandra and his appointment as minister was due to Jayachandra's wife Sudhva.[36] A passage in the **PPm** enables us to draw the conclusion that Kasisvara, taking pity of the ruler's plight, favoured them by the restoration of their principalities.[37] This is an indirect exhibition of the inherent weakness of the Kasisvara who does not seem to have been in a position to maintain the acquisitions, made either by him or by his predecessors. Kasisvara, here, is to be identified with Jayachandra Gahadawala.

The territories said to have been conquered by Kasisvara were not actually in the possession of Jayachandra, though we are told by a Muslim historian that the king of Banaras possessed the largest territory from the borders of China to the province of Malwa.[38] In all the sources there is unanimity with regard to only one point and that is, that he was the king of Kasi. Vidyapati's **PP**, **PPm** and the Muslim historians testify to this fact and this is further supported by epigraphic evidence [**JASB** (NS) X, 97-104; V 473, 476]. **Surjana-Prakasa** refers to the fact that he conquered all the surrounding lands and levied tributes from sea to sea. We learn further from the **Rambhamanjarinataka**, Act I, that on account of his repeated victories against Shihabuddin he had become arrogant. All these evidence, if put together, would go to support the contention of the **PPm** that we cannot reject it outright as a mere boast and hyperbolic expression. There must have been some grain of truth in the statement of all these authorities including Vidyapati who describes him as a powerful king of Kasi and Ujjain. The Madhainagar grant of Laksmanasena and the Bakarganj inscription of Kesavasena refer to a conflict between the king of Kasi and Laksmanasena and further credit the latter with having erected pillars of victory at Banaras and Allahabad.[39] Umapatidhara speaks of the defeat of Kasiraja.[40] The **Prabandhakosa**[41], the **PPm**, the **PP**[42] and the Sena records corroborate each other and refer to a conflict between Jayachandra and Laksmanasena.

All this is about the identification of Kasiraja whose minister was Vidyadhara. In respect of his victories in Mithila, we have to be cautious. In the Maithili sources, there is no reference to any such victory. Vidyapati has given us the history of the Karnatas in his tales of **PP**.[43] Malladeva of Mithila has been associated with king Jayachandra of Kannauj (1170 – 1193 AD) and the Chikkors of Pithi. There is no indication of any subordinate status for Malladeva in these tales, though there is a reference to the contest between the Gahadawalas and the Chikkor kingdom in which Malladeva figures prominently. The ascription of victory over Champaran to Jayachandra Kasiraja in the **PPm** may be described as conventional and should be taken as an exaggeration and nothing more. Since the earlier Kasiraja of the



PPm (e.g. Kalchuris) had some success in devastating Camparanya, the poet here seems to have ascribed this victory to Jayachandra in vague terms. No other source, hitherto known, gives us any information in this regard. In the present state of our knowledge, we should take it as nothing more than the poet's fancy.

There is ample information available with regard to Candesvara, the famous minister of king Harisimhadeva of Mithila (14th century AD), and the author of the famous work on polity, **Rajanitiratnakara**.[44] The extensive power wielded by Candesvara is mentioned in the verses composed in his praise by his protégé, poet Haribrahmadeva.[45] Haribrahma of the **PPm** whose Avahatta poems are cited therein, was a protégé of Candesvara of Mithila, the mighty minister of Harisimha who is credited with having conquered Nepal and performed **Tulapurusadana**. The verses in the **PPm** are a panegyric on the poet's patron.[46] Candesvara's greatness is known to us from a number of sources within and without Mithila. The **PPm** helps us in ascertaining his greatness and prowess.

IV

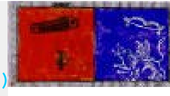
MAHESVARA STONE INSCRIPTION DATED 692 AH (=1292-93 AD)

(WITH PLATE)

(A rare Arabic inscription of the reign of Ruknuddin Kaika'us of Bengal, 1291-1301 AD)

The present inscription on a black stone slab, probably a part of a huge construction, is nicely incised in an old Arabic style (in Tughra character) and in highly stylish ornamental character of Bengal. Each letter is 4" to 6 ½" long. It is in a perfect state of preservation. In spite of my best efforts to procure the stone slab for being preserved in our museum at Begusarai, we could not get it. A thorough search for Hindu and Muslim inscriptions in this area will yield valuable results.

I call it a rare discovery because the present inscription is one of the few rare earliest Arabic inscriptions discovered in Bihar and probably the first in North Bihar, which was for a pretty long time under independent Hindu rulers[47], and also because it is one of the earliest inscriptions of the reign of Kaika'us, whose name is omitted from the list of rulers of Bengal and whose period of reign has been determined by only numismatic and epigraphic evidence. Kaika'us, as the son of Nasiruddin Mahmud (Bughra Khan), is recorded by Amir Khusrau in his well-known poem **"Qirans-sadin"**. No epigraph of the early Bengal Sultanate has yet been discovered in North Bihar, though it is said that early Muslim rulers of Delhi and Bengal used to invade Mithila (North Bihar) or pass through it in course of Bengal campaign or vice-versa. The region between the Kosi and the Gandaka, that is the Kingdom of Mithila, remained un-subdued even during the time of the mighty Bakhtiyar[48], whose territory included the river tracts on the north bank of the Ganges from the mouth of the Gandaka to that of the Kosi.[49] Through the river tract of Bhagalpur and Munger, lying north of the Ganges, lay the highway communication between Bengal and Oudh down to the fourteenth century.[50] During the period under review, Mithila kingdom, though independent, suffered both at the hands of Oudh and Lakhnavati. These rulers followed a policy of **"Vetasi-Vrtti"** with regard to the Muslim rulers.



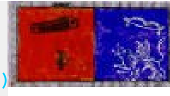
It appears from the present inscription, which records the construction of a building, that the early Muslim Sultans of Bengal held their sway up to the Gandaka – a territory already acquired by their early Muslim invaders in eastern India. They could not make Mithila their route of expansion and naturally they tried to control the river tract (north of Munger) up to the river Gandaka.

Kaikas (or Kaika'us), the only surviving descendent of the house of Balban in Bengal, was raised to the throne in 690 AH. The date of his accession was known to us from a silver coin of 690 AH[51] and our inscription now supports this point that he was the ruler of Bengal in 692 AH. Prior to this discovery, three of his Arabic inscriptions were already known. One of his inscriptions was found at Lakhisarai[52] in the district of Munger. The present inscription tells us that not only south Munger but also a portion of the present district of Begusarai, at least up to the river Gandaka, was under his control. Sir Jadunath writes[53]: "The Hindu chiefs of Tirhut were still maintaining their independence though cooped up between the province of Oudh of the Delhi Sultanate and that of Bihar (an annexe of the Sultanate of Lakhanawati)." Here it may be added that Kaikas or his feudatory Firuz Aitigin must have attempted an invasion against the independent Hindu Kingdom of Mithila to restore the old boundary up to Gandaka. It is remarkable that Mulla Taqia, the only authoritative Muslim source of the history of Tirhut, is silent on this point. The extension of Kaikas's power in North Bihar, just a year after his accession, amply demonstrates that he was not a weak ruler. The assertion of Sir Wolsey Haig[54] that Kaikas owed allegiance to Allauddin Khalji of Delhi does not stand in the face of his inscriptions which indicate his extension of power. Allauddin could not ever subdue the rulers of Mithila. Kaikas has been ignored by Persian historians and court chronicles of Delhi. A contemporary of Jalaluddin and Allauddin Khalji, Kaikas was one of the illustrious Bengal Sultans who kept up the high tradition of the house of Balban there. This is evident from the high sounding titles, used in present inscription, the first line of which is more or less the same as that of Lakhisarai epigraph. He succeeded not only in maintaining sway over his feudatories and the independence of Bengal, but also in extending his power up to the place of the discovery of this inscription.

It will not be out of place to point out that all the inscriptions of the reign of Kaikas, hitherto discovered, confirm him as the ruler of Bengal in 697 and 698 AH. The present inscription, in question, is the only epigraph which places him in 692 AH, also read as 690 AH by some, and to that extent, its importance cannot be minimised. While giving important information about Kaikas's date, it further tells us that the construction was ordered by one Firuz Aitigin, the governor of the extreme Western districts of the Kingdom of Bengal, as then constituted. Firuz Aitigin of the Lakhisarai inscription seems to have extended his authority in North Bihar. The high sounding titles of Firuz are interesting and according to Yazdani, it indicates that relations between Delhi and Bengal were sufficiently strained. The fact that Kaikas's governor extended his power up to the district of Begusarai, goes to prove that Kaikas was not a weak ruler. Firuz was a feudatory of Kaikas.

TEXT:

Line 1 – Ammar = Bena Hazal Hasinul Hussain Fi Amalis-Sultan-Salatin Ruknudduniya Waddin Abul Muzzaffar Kaika'us Shah-us-Sultan-us-Salatin Bina Sultanus. Sultanus Yamin Khila-fat Allah Nasirul Amirah Momineeb.



Line 2 – Alkhanul-Akbar Al-almil Adinanill (?) Akhtiarul Haque- Waddin Al Mokhatile Ba Khan-i-Khana Abul Mali Firuz Aitigin. Al Sultan Zaifaullah Fi Qalbebis (?)[55] Sulkhe (?) ....Muharram sanat Ishana Batishin shitanayata (= 692 AH – Moharram).

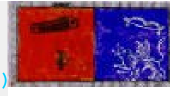
Substance: During Kaikas's rule, Firuz Aitigin ordered for the erection of a huge and solid structure. Kaikas was King of Kings, pillar or prop of the world and of the poor and needy, Sultan of Sultans, defender of the Faith and right hand of the Khalifa.

Greater of Khans, upholder of justice, possessor of all good qualities, may Allah enhance him in the estimation of others. Setting moon of the last Muharram 692 AH.

V

For the post Karnata and Oinwara period, we have to depend mainly on the literary sources. Books on philosophy, religion, literature, criticism, Smritis, etc. contain casual reference to the rules and their dependents. Vidyapati[56] is, of course, the most important for the Oinwara period as he himself was a participant in the political drama for more than fifty years. Authors like Candesvara, Vacaspati, Paksadhara, Samkara and a host of others have left a detailed account of the contemporary prevailing conditions. Inscriptions of Narsimhadeva Oinwara at Kandaha (Saharsa), and the Bhagirathpur epigraph of Nasrat Shah at Matihani (Begusarai) and various other un-noticed inscriptions and coins (including one of Sivasimha and Bhairavasimha) of Hindu and Muslim rulers throw considerable light on the otherwise unknown period of Mithila's history. The Raj Archives, now thrown open, have valuable records which enable us to reconstruct the history of Mithila up to the twentieth century.

CHAPTER II



EARLY HISTORY OF VIDEHA

CHRONOLOGICAL PROBLEM: The history of Aryanisation of Videha is traced by some to the Rigvedic times. It may be pointed out that the Rigveda does neither mention Nami Sapya as a king[1] nor as the founder of any dynasty in Mithila. The mention of Nami Sapya in the **Panchavimsa Brahmana** does not imply that the king was identical with his namesake in the **Rigveda**. The **Puranas** and the Epics are silent about Gotam Rahugana. The **Puranas** associate Gautam of the Angirasa clan with Nimi. Pradhan holds that Gautama, the husband of Ahilya and priest of Nimi was a contemporary of Divodasa Atithigava of north Panchala and Dasratha of Ayodhya.[2] It is difficult to agree with Pradhan's theory in the present state of our knowledge. The **Ramayana** makes Gautama and his son Satananda as contemporaries of Rama and Siradhwaja Janaka. We know that Nimi and Siradhwaja were far removed from one another. There are confusing facts and statements[3] regarding the process of aryanisation in eastern provinces of which Videha was just a part, and by way of illustration we can say that the burial place in Videha was made round instead of the Aryan custom of making it four-cornered.[4]

Videha is first mentioned in the **Satpatha Brahmana**. Mathava, the Videgha and his priest Gotam Rahugana followed the path of Agni Vaisvanara. On his march to the east, the fire god burnt the region between the rivers Saraswati and Sadanira. Sadanira formed the boundary between the kingdoms of Kosala and Videha. These were the Mathavas. Videha had been Aryanised even before the composition of the **Satpatha Brahmana**, which belongs to the Vajasenayi recension of the **Yajurveda** which had its origin in the east, that is Videha.[5] Videha was Aryanised after Kosala. Pargiter[6], on the authority of the **Puranas** and the **Ramayana**, makes Nimi Videha as the founder of the Videha dynasty.[7] H C Raichoudhary holds that if Mathava Videha was the founder of the royal line of Mithila, Nami Sapya cannot claim that distinction.[8] P L Bhargava argues that Nami Sapya, Nemi, Nimi, Mathava Videgha are identical.[9] Nimi and Vasisthas are contemporary in the **Puranas**. According to the Puranic tradition, Nimi employed Gautam instead of Vasistha (who had gone to perform Indra's sacrifice) to act as his priest in the great sacrifice. Gautam married Ahalya (sister of Divodasa of north Panchala). Ahalyas illicit relation with Indra finds mention in the **Brahmanas**.[10] Doubts persist about the identification of these personalities.

Whatever be the actual position of these rulers, we know that the dynasty of Videha traced its descent to Ishvakus' son Nimi of the solar race. Nimi is called Videha. The dynastic list is maintained in the **Puranas** and partly in the **Ramayana**. Nimi's son Mithi is the founder of the city of Mithila. His full name was Mithi Janaka and this title became the family name of the Janaka dynasty. The early rulers of Mithia are known as Vaidehas, Janakas and Maithilas. Pargiter collected fifty three names from the **Puranas** and the **Ramayana**:

1. Nimi Videha, 2. Mithi Janaka Vaideha, 3. Udavasu, 4. Nandivardhana, 5. Suketu, 6. Devarata, 7. Brhduktha, 8. Mahavirya, 9. Dhrtimant, 10. Sudhrti, 11. Dhrstaketu, 12. Haryasva, 13. Maru, 14. Pratindhaka, 15. Kirtiratha, 16. Devamidha, 17. Vibudha, 18. Mahadhatr, 19. Kirtirata, 20. Maharoman,

21. Svarnaroman, 22. Hrshvaroman, 23. Sirdhwaja Janaka, 24. Bhanumant, 25. Pradyumna-Satadyumna, 26. Muni, 27. Urjavaha, 28. Sanadvaja, 29. Sakuni, 30. Anjana, 31. Rtujit, 32. Aristanemi, 33. Srutuyus, 34. Suparsva, 35. Sanjaya, 36. Kshemari, 37. Anenoas, 38. Minaratha, 39. Satyaratha, 40. Upaguru, 41. Upagupta, 42. Svagata, 43. Suvarcas, 44. Sruta, 45. Susruta, 46. Jaya, 47. Vijaya, 48. Rta, 49. Sunaya, 50. Vitahavya, 51. Dhrti, 52. Bahulasva, 53. Krta-Krtaksana. Other extra names are: Agni, Svananda, Suparsva, Subhasha.

Of all these kings, Siradhwaja was the most famous. He was a contemporary of Dasratha of Ayodhya (Kosala) and king Lomapada of Anga. Sita was his adopted daughter who was married to Rama. His daughter Urmila was married to Laksmana. The daughters of his younger brother, Kusadhwaja (founder of the Sankasya line) Mandavi and Srutikirti, were married to Bharata and Shatrughna respectively.

Pradhan discusses the genealogy from Siradhwaja to Krti and suggests that after Sakuni the Janaka dynasty branched into two lines. He makes Bahulasva a contemporary of Janaka Vaideha and Yajnavalkya. P L Bhargava makes Nimi a descendent of Ishvaku (and not a son) and gives the names of only fifty-one kings. He is of the opinion that both the Vedic and Puranic accounts agree in so far as the foundation of the Kingdom of Videha is concerned. The line of argument is that Gotam is the priest of that king in both the accounts. The **Puranas** call the king by his proper name and the **Satpatha Brahmana** calls him by his patronymic. Videha is the corrupt form of Videgha.

Between the Bharata war and the extermination of Mithila by the Nandas we have a list of the following kings from different sources: 1. Suruchi I; 2. Suruchi II; 3. Mahapanada; 4. Mahajanaka I; 5. Arittha Janaka; 6. Pola Janaka; 7. Mahajanaka II; 8. Dighavu; 9. Sadhina; 10. Narada; 11. Nimi; 12. Kalara. The first two belonged to the Suruchi group and the rest to the Janaka group. We have the following list from the Mahabharata: 1.2.3. Indradyumna; 4. Ugrasena – Aindradyumna; 5.6. Devarata; 7. Daivarati; 8. Janadeva; 9. Dharmadhwaja; 10. Videharaja; 11. Nimi; 12. Karala.

R Morton Smith in his '**Dates and Dynasties in Earliest India**' (Delhi, 1973) has tackled the problem of early Videhan chronology and history on scientific lines (pp. 127-135). Even then the confusion persists and it is difficult to suggest anything definite regarding chronological set up and order of succession. Various traditions have been mixed up at one place or the other. At times, it appears as if the editor was trying to reconcile two different traditions, one of descent from Janaka and one from Mithi. The Janakas end with Mahapadmananda between 380 and 374 BC when he uprooted the Maithilas. There was more than one branch of the Janaka family. Bhanumant's brother Kusadhwaja became king of Kasi. His son is Dharmadhwaja I and to this line belong Janadeva and Dharmadhwaja II. The sons of Dharmadhwaja I are Krtadhwaja, father of Kesidhwaja, and Mitadhwaja, whose son is Khandikya. To this line might belong Vicitravirya and his son Dhrtarastra of Kasi who lost his sacrificial horse to Satanika Satrajita.[11] Grandson or son of his should be Ajatasatru of Kasi who disputed with Balaki Gargya and who expected to be acclaimed like a true Janaka in the **Brhadaranyaka Upnisad**, even if, with irony. It was presumably his son Bhadhrasena Ajatasatrava who was bewitched by Uddalaka Aruni. This line was also conquered by Prasenjita's father (540-30 BC).

LATER VIDEHAN KINGS: The most famous king of the post Bharata war period in Videha was Janaka Vaideha whose fame rests not so much on his material achievements as on his patronage to culture and philosophy. He was a great sacrifice and the discussions held in his court find a prominent place in the third book of the **Brhadaranyaka Upnisad**. His court was thronged with Brahmanas from Kuru Panchal, Kosala and Madra countries. Uddalaka Aruni's disciple Yajnavalkya Vajasenaneya was the hero of the show. This Janaka Vaideha may be identical with Mahajanaka II of the **Jatakas** and Janaka Daivarati of the **Mahabharata**. The last in the line was Karala Janaka (Janaka the terrible) and is known to us from the Buddhist and Brahmanical sources. We learn from the **Nimi Jataka** (No. 541) that he brought his line to an end. Kautilya[12] says that Karala Vaideha perished along with his kingdom and relations for a lascivious attempt on a Brahmana maiden. Asvaghosa also confirms the statement of Kautilya.[13] It appears that the later Videha kings preferred luxury to the welfare of the people. Karala was attacked and killed by his subjects. The causes of the decline of the Vaidehan monarchy are noted in contemporary literature and some of them are:

i. The detatched outlook and renunciation of the rulers;
ii. Frequent struggles among the rulers of Mithila and Kasi;
iii. Battle between Uttara Panchal and Mithila (**Mahaummagga Jataka**, No. 546);
iv. Frequent foreign invasions sapped the foundations of the Videhan kingdom;
v. Karala's licentiousness ultimately led to the fall of the monarchy;
vi. Jealousy and conspiracy at the court of Mithila forced Agramatya to leave Videha; and
vii. Finally, Mahapadma exterminated the Maithilas.

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY: The Videhas had their capital at Mithila. Mithila has been able to preserve its cultural continuity since the beginning of the Aryan civilisation. It is to Videgha Mathava that the brahmanisation of this region is attributed and he is probably its earliest recorded monarch. Eggeling suggests that the people of Kosala and Videha claimed Mathava as their common ancestor and the two branches were separated by the river Sadanira. In course of time, the Videhan monarchy succeeded in establishing a powerful kingdom.[14] Videha became the centre of Brahmanical civilisation. **Yajurveda** originated in the land of Videha. Though Yajnavalkya had come out victorious at the court of Janaka in the philosophical disputation and won the prize, yet he begged to be instructed by the king on the true meaning of **Agnihotra** (fire sacrifice). A dialogue between Maitreya and Yajnavalkya points to the great erudition of Maithila women. Videha took a leading part in the development of Vedic culture. Mithila was one of the great towns of India.

Bhima and Karna are credited with having conquered Mithila. On his way from Indraprastha to Rajgrha, Krisna, Bhima and Arjuna visited Mithila. Krsna had been to Mithila to see his friend Srutadeva. Janaka had disputation with a nun Sulbha. The **Vanaparva** of **MBH** speaks of Kausikidhama as the eastern boundary of Mithila in the epic age. It was on the Kausiki that Visvamitra attained his Brahmanahood. Videha was an ally of the Kurus in the Bharata War because

i. Pandu had conquered Mithila (**Adiparva**);
ii. Bhima and Karna had attacked Mithila and Nepal (**Sabhaparva**);
iii. Duryodhana had intimate relation with Mithila and he had learnt his Gadavidya here.

During the course of war Balarama, the preceptor of Duryodhana, had taken shelter in Mithila. It is said that a Maithila king Krtaksema Janaka was killed in this war. With the disappearance of the Pariksitas, the centre of gravity shifts to Videha.

The **Jatakas** throw a flood of light on the contemporary history of Videha. The great city of Mithila was composed in part of four suburbs[15] extending beyond each of its four gates and called not **gamas** but **nigamas**. These were named east, west, north, south market towns respectively. The kingdom had ten thousand villages. Videha was frequented by merchants and during the time of Buddha, people from Sravasti came to sell their wares in Videha. Videha was famous for the manufacture of swords. The people of Mithila used to go the Suvarnabhumi for trade. After the subjugation of Mithila by the Nandas, the period of obscurity begins and we do not know much about its history. Close relations existed between Videha, Kasi and Kosaa at an early period.

The Buddhist sources also throw some interesting sidelights on the early history of Videha. It is said that king Renu with the help of Mahagovinda Jotipala founded the Videhan kingdom.[16] According to Buddhaghosha Videha was colonised by settlers who were brought from Publea-Videha by king Mandhata.[17] The Videhas were included in the list of people described as **Prachyas** or easterners. The Videhas were not the indigenous people of Videha but we cannot preclude the possibility of the influence of earlier non-aryan inhabitants of the region on the Aryan customs with whom they no doubt inter-married.[18] The **Yajnavalkya Smriti**[19] says that the path of **Dharma** was revealed by Yajnavalkya in that country where black antelope roams. Videha acquired sanctity because it was approved as a pure land by the earlier **Dharmasastras**.

MEANING OF VIDEHA: The word 'Videha' stood for the title of the king and also as the name of a people. The Videhas were also connected with walls or ramparts – it may be taken in the sense of 'people without forts or ramparts' or 'destroyers of forts or ramparts'. The people, led by Videgha Mathava, were invaders of foreign land and may well have been known as destroyers of walls and ramparts. The word 'deha' in the **Rigveda** means primarily a wall or rampart and the city.[20] Videha may mean a people without wall or rampart.[21] If Videha conquered non-aryans, he might have destroyed their forts as Indra did in the west. There are various theories about the origin of Videha including one of churning the dead body (Videha) of Nimi after he had been cursed by Vasistha.[22] All explanations are only hypothetical and we are not in a position to propound any theory about its actual meaning and scope.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Videha applied to the whole country north of the Ganges of which Mithila was the capital. It was also called Janakpur from the fact that king Janaka ruled from there. It included Vaisali, Videha and a portion of Anga north of the Ganges. It also included a portion of Nepalese terai. The older Videha covered almost the same region as did later Tirabhukti. The Videhan territories comprised the areas indicated today by the Terai, south-eastern portion of the kingdom of Nepal inclusive of the lower range of hills and area between Gandaka and Kosi.

THE VIDEHAS AND THE LICHCHAVIS: After Karala Janaka, monarchy was abolished in Mithila and republic was established. The Videhas joined the confederacy of the Vajjians. In the Buddhist literature,

Videha is mentioned as a republic. Kautilya means by the Vajjis Videha only. Even Patanjali treats Videha as a republican state.

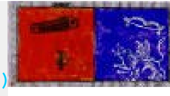
The Videhas were young republic at the time of the Buddha and formed an important part of the Vajjian confederacy. It is on account of the predominance of the Lichchavis in Buddhist literature that the Videhas have been overshadowed and even scholars have not paid due attention to this point. The Videhas were as important as the Lichchavis and they appear to have retained their independence (even as a Republic) with their capital at Mithila. The Videhas were a large republic and in internal affairs they appear to have retained their freedom alright as we have no direct evidence to suggest that the Lichchavis and the Videhas had joint executive body. It is true that the establishment of republic in Vaisali hastened the process of republicanisation of Videha. Whether there was any conflict between the Lichchavis and the Videhas or not, we do not know but it appears that the Lichchavis, in course of their expansion, might have subjugated the Videhas and brought them under their control and after stabilising themselves in Videha, they might have shifted to Vaisali. There is no doubt that the Lichchavis held the supreme power during the republican period. The old Videhan aristocracy shifted to the new centre of power at Vaisali. The Lichchavis became the most influential successors to the old Videhan kingdom. Mithila continued to be the chief town of Vajjian republic. Videha came to be administered by an assembly of the Ksatriya aristocrats.[23] Videhas and Nayas do not figure as tribes putting forth their claims to Buddha's relics and it is evident that they were not interested in Buddhism.

ADMINISTRATIVE PATTERN OF THE VIDEHAN REPUBLIC: The Videhan assembly was smaller than the Lichchavis assembly. It had also non-ksatriya heads of families. Mithila was a great centre of trade and naturally the wealthy merchants were also represented in the assembly. We learn from the **Jatakas**[24] that there were crowds of ministers, Brahmanas and wealthy merchants in Mithila who influenced the then politics. The members of the assembly governing the republic also called themselves **Rajas**. Kautilya's communities living by the title of **Raja** also included the Videhas in the Vrjikas.[25] According to Altekar[26], the Videhan Council consisted of nine **Rajas** but we learn from a **Jataka**[27] that the Videhans had a Council of four including the king. The Assembly possibly met once a year and the day to day administration was carried on by the Council. From the **Jatakas** (VI. 220ff; 30ff; 225ff) we have a list of the following officers:

i. Raja;
ii. Uparaja;
iii. Senapati;
iv. Bhandagarika.

- There are references to seven main officers but only the above four have been named. These officers were appointed after proper test. Even the king was chosen by a qualified body of citizens. The president of a republic was known as a **Ganamukhya** for which requisite qualifications were prescribed. Normally a **Ganamukhya** was a Ksatriya possessing necessary qualities of leadership, popularity and strength.

In the administration of justice, the king or the president or the **Ganamukhya** was assisted by a Council. Like the Lichchavis, the Videhan Council tried judicial case and awarded punishments according to



precedents. The most beautiful woman of the Gana, **Pingala**[28], was not allowed to lead a normal married life and was appointed as the courtesan of the republic. According to the **Jatakas** (VI. p 43), the Videhans had a troop of dancing girls, panegyrists and musical instrument players. These women might have influenced politics at the Videhan court. The Videha politicians also used to shift to Vaisali, the capital of the confederacy, and acquire power there. There are some instances of it. The threat of Magadhan empire forced the members of the Vajji confederacy to stand together. The Videhans[29] were represented in the Vajjian Council though that is not mentioned in the Jain sources which mention only the Lichchavis and the Mallas. There is no doubt about it that the confederates were proportionately represented at the federal headquarters. The Videhans played a significant role in the Vajjian confederacy.

After the defeat of the Vajji confederacy, their fate was the same as that of the Lichchavis. The Videhans were included in the Magadhan empire before the Mauryan period. They are not mentioned separately by Panini and Kautilya but are included in the Vajjis. The areas round Videha and Vaisali came to be jointly called Tirabhukti in the Gupta period.[30] Traditionally it is called **Tribhukti** because it is regarded as a land of three mythical sacrifices at the birth of Sita, at Dhanukha and at Janakpur. It extends up to the bank of the Ganges. It denoted the biggest administrative unit under the Guptas ruled by a royal prince.

CHAPTER III

AJATASATRU AND THE LICHCHAVIS OF VAISALI

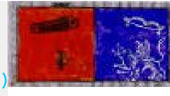
The foundation of the Magadhan Empire by Bimbisara in the sixth century BC marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Indian imperialism. Prior to the advent of, and contemporaneous with the rise of Magadha, the whole of northern India was studded with small republican states, either oligarchy or democratic in character. Among these republican states, Vaisali was the most important. Vaisali was not only the capital of the Lichchavis but also of the Vajjian confederacy consisting of eight republican states. It is an irony of history that both the systems, imperialism of Magadha and republicanism of Vaisali, grew side by side in Bihar and both had the blessings of Buddha. Bimbisara strengthened his empire by establishing matrimonial alliance with a number of states including Vaisali, a relationship which was to break in no distant future. This matrimonial relationship did not deter the aggressive imperialist, Ajatasatru, from invading the republic and one is inclined to call it a 'tragic fight of blood against blood'.[1] Vaidehiputra did not hesitate to root out the very existence of his maternal grandfather's kingdom. Vaisali was the headquarters of a very powerful confederacy of non-monarchical states in north Bihar. That they had taken the place of old Videha is amply demonstrated by the fact that their girls are referred to as Vaidehis. Here the supreme authority was vested in an assembly where the great personal dignity was enjoyed by the members.

Vaisali was an eye-sore to Ajatasatru. Magadha was situated on the south of the Ganges while north bank was under the republican control. The conquest of Anga had given a fillip to the advancement of the Magadha's imperialistic designs on account of its control of the river, Campa. Hence the control of both the banks of the Ganges was a necessary pre-requisite for a further advance of Magadha. Bimbisara had succeeded through an alliance in making his strength felt; but for Ajatasatru, Vaisali proved to be hard nut. Time and again, he had occasions to see their strength growing from more to more and the vast prosperous region attracted him. We have no authentic account of the causes of this battle but a critical study of the heaps of materials enable us to arrive at some truth. The Lichchavis must have made a great impression upon the contemporary Indian politics as we find that the event of this war is faithfully maintained in the Buddhist and Jain traditions.

The general and well-known causes of struggle between the Lichchavis and Ajatasatru are as follows:

1. According to the Jain tradition, Bimbisara had given his four famous elephants and some jewellery to his sons from Cellana, viz. Halla and Vahalla. At the instigation of his wife Ajatasatru wanted the return of these articles from his brothers. They refused to return and fled to their grandfather's kingdom. Since Ajatasatru failed to secure their extradition peacefully, he launched a war against the Lichchavis.[2]

2. According to Buddhaghosa's **Sumangala-Vilasini**, the war was due to a breach of trust on the part of the Lichchavis in connection with the possession of a mine of precious gems and some fragrant material near the port of the Ganges.[3] One half of the said river port was in the Magadhan territory and other half in that of the Vajjis. The mysterious scented substance was produced in this port and it was very much in demand. Ajatasatru claimed this stuff for himself. The Vajjians anticipated him and took all.[4]



That irritated him and he took a vow to root out the Vajjians. Whether any agreement for equal division of the spoils was reached or not and whether the Lichchavis broke any such agreement or not, we cannot definitely say in the present state of our knowledge.[5]

3. The Lichchavis are often said to have caused troubles by raiding the Magadha territory.[6]

4. The Buddhist tradition maintains that Ajatasatru had a foster brother, Abhaya (son of Ambapali by Bimbisara). Ajatasatru was suspicious of Abhaya whose loyalty towards the Lichchavis was only natural.[7]

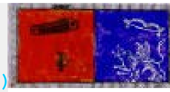
5. In the Mahavagga, Sunidha and Vassakara are described as building a fort at Pataligrama with a view to repel the Vajjis.[8]

6. In the **Nirayavalisutta** also there is a reference to this event.

The causes, given above, are indicative of the fact that Ajatasatru was in search of an opportunity. As a true imperialist, he felt the need of rooting out this prosperous republic and avail of their immense wealth for the benefit of his empire. From a study of above causes, it is apparent that his main motive was economic. His policy was to control both banks of the Ganges from Banaras to the border of Bengal. The economic importance of the river, in the then conditions, need hardly be emphasised. He aimed at the mastery of both the banks of the Ganges to control the economic life of a sufficiently vast area and at the same time wanted to grab the innumerable wealth of the Vajjian confederacy. Needless to say, these Sanghas or republican states were invincible. Even Kautilya has suggested that the Sanghas[9] were invincible and thereby he has not overestimated the power of such Sanghas in resisting direct assault. They were too strong to be destroyed by military action and that is fairly confirmed by Alexander's campaign in the Punjab.[10]

According to Kautilya, the Sanghas were **Rajasabdopajivi** and their acquisition was better than that of an army or an ally. Ajatasatru did not immediately invade the Vajji territory and took sufficient time in deliberating over the matter. The Magadhan monarch was convinced of the fact that the Vaisalians could not be overcome in battle. They could be destroyed only through diplomacy and by creating a wedge in their unbreakable alliance. The **Atthakatha** faithfully maintains an account of this event.

Before embarking on his ambitious expedition against the Lichchavis, Ajatasatru thought it wise to consult the Buddha, who was then resting at Rajagrha. It is very strange as to why Ajatasatru took such a step when we know that 'his relations with the Buddha were not very cordial and Buddha's sympathy with Lichchavis was well known.'[11] Vassakara went to Buddha to seek his consent. Buddha, addressing Ananda, suggested that so long as the Vajjis held together regular meetings, revered their ancient shrines, respected their women and elders and their age-old customs, they were invincible. According to Buddhaghosa, it was on the Buddha's advice that Ajatasatru decided not to wage immediate war on the Vajjians but to bide his time. There is nothing to doubt the authenticity of Buddhaghosa who was himself a Magadhan and he may have had access to some trustworthy records of traditions.[12] Possibly Kautilya had in mind this invincibility of the republican tribes and that is why he has not recommended military actions against them.



Soon after the interview, Buddha went on his last trip to Vaisali. As he crossed the Ganges, his followers met Vassakara with another minister Sunidha supervising the construction of a fort at Pataligrama[13] in order to repel the Vajjis. While all this was going on, Sunidha and Vassakara invited the Buddha to dinner to which he readily agreed.[14] Whether it was the liberality of Buddha to accept the food of these imperialists at the time when they were busy preparing for the destruction of the Vajjians or his intentional acquiescence to rising imperialist forces, it is difficult to ascertain. He had already given the clue to Vassakara at Rajagrha by suggesting that the Lichchavis could be conquered only through diplomacy[15] and intrigue and here at Pataligrama he possibly connived at the imperialist preparation, as we see that he did not give out any information about the proposed invasion of Vaisali to the Lichchavis in his last lap of tour of that region. Buddha's silence here is inexplicable in view of the fact that he has compared the Lichchavis with Gods. It was only through **Upalapana** (bribe) and **Bheda** (discord) that the Lichchavis could be won. That is why Ajatasatru, apart from his military strength, also adopted the well known diplomatic technique of machinations and strategy.[16] He wanted 'to strike.... root out.... destroy .... bring the Vajjians to utter ruin.' Their strength lay in the group-life and Buddha had given Vassakara the clue of their strength. Whatever be the reason of Buddha's inexplicable silence, the Buddha himself could not have advised Ajatasatru to try the unscrupulous alternatives as his sympathy for the Vajjians was too outspoken. If any reliance is to be placed on the traditions about the nine republican states of Kasi-Kosal being on the side of Vaisali, a conjecture can be hazarded with some amount of certainty that Buddha possibly kept silent over the Magadhan preparations against the Vajjians in view of his hidden animosity to Kosala which had subdued the Sakyas. Kosala's defeat anticipated at the hands of Magadha might have been in his mind and that is why he kept mum and left things going as they were.

To achieve his imperialistic end, Vassakara thought of a scheme, pretended to quarrel with Ajatasatru and fled to Vaisali, in the guise of a refugee. He was there to sow dissensions and Vassakara took three years to fulfil his mission. He was given a position of trust in the tribal council and betrayed the confidence reposed to him. He succeeded in sowing dissension and being successful in his mission, he sent a message to Ajatasatru to invade the country.[17] The fort had already been ready, whether for defence or offence, we are not sure. If the **Mahaparinibbanasutta** is to be relied upon, the fort was meant for attack against the Lichchavis and not for defence only, though it could serve both the purposes. The **Atthakatha** preserves an account of the Machiavellian tactics of Vassakara[18], who paved the way for the advanced statecraft and diplomacy of Kautilya. The republican tribes were restive and they entered into an alliance with the enemies of Ajatasatru in Kasi-Kosala. Ajatasatru had thus to face the hostility not only of Sravasti but also of the Vajjians of Vaisali and the Mallas of Kusinagara. The annexation of Kasi and Vaisali brought him face to face with Avanti and this had a great influence on the subsequent policy of Magadha.[19]For Ajatasatru, it was a protracted and difficult war.

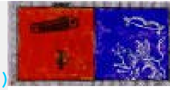
In the **Nirayavalisutta**[20], it is stated that Ajatasatru prepared to attack Vaisali. Cetaka called eighteen Ganarajas of Kasi-Kosala, Lichchavis and Mallikas and they met together to discuss the situation. The **Majjhima-nikaya** refers to the good relationship between Kosala and Vaisali. Dr Raichoudhury says: "It seems that all the enemies of Ajatasatru including the rulers of Kasi-Kosala and Vaisali offered a combined resistance. The Kosalan war and the Vajjian war were probably not an isolated affair but parts of a common movement directed against the establishment of the hegemony of Magadha."[21] Ajatasatru

and the Lichchavis were never on good terms. According to Malalasekhar, even Pradyota of Avanti made preparations to avenge the death of his friend Bimbisara.[22] Raichoudhury's contention had been rightly challenged by Basham.[23]

It is well known fact that peace was concluded between Magadha and the Kosala possibly after Pasenadi's death and during the rule of Vidudabha just before the war with the Vajjis. Since Kasi and Kosala were under Pasenadi and after him under Vidudabha how could it come to be ruled by eighteen tribal chieftains? Hence in view of Kosala's monarchical system, Raichoudhury's contention is not free from doubts. B M Barua has gone still further and has suggested that the whole of Kosala kingdom was under the suzerainty of the Lichchavis.[24] Barua's suggestion is too far-fetched. Basham has suggested that 'the tribes unwilling to accept Vidudabha's suzerainty and incensed at the destruction of the Sakyas, took advantage of his death to throw off allegiance and allied themselves with the strongest tribal republic of the region, the Vajjis or Lichchavis of Vaisali.'[25] The natural conclusion seems to be irresistible that all people of the north, whether independent or included into one or the other empire, combined to secure victory for their way of life and thinking under the leadership of Lichchavis.

It appears that, at the initiative of the Lichchavis, a confederacy of all republican states was organised with the sole intention of making a last bid for the existence of the republican states in the face of growing imperialism. The republican states in the north-west had succumbed to the repeated foreign invasions and the rise of the monarchical states had sounded the death-knell of small republican states. The creation of Vajjian confederacy at the time of Buddha seems to have been the direct result of the threat of rising monarchies. Vaisali, being the centre of this confederacy, yet inspired the existing republican states all over northern India and at the time of this battle, consisted of nine Lichchavis, nine Mallikas, and eighteen tribal chieftains of Kasi-Kosala. These chieftains were under the control of Kosalan monarchy and they seem to have revolted and joined the confederacy. The whole confederacy was under the leadership of Cetaka.

As has been stated above, the war was a protracted one. The whole strategy seems to have been worked out in a meeting of the confederacy and the war did not prove to be an easy affair for Ajatasatru. In this war, Ajatasatru's brothers were killed.[26] The Jain sources have described this war as the 'last battle with large stones'.[27] The **Nirayavalika** refers to Ajatasatru's campaign against the Lichchavis. The Lichchavi chief, Cetaka, fiercely fought the battle and killed a certain prince named Kala of Ajatasatru's camp and completely routed the forces under his command. According to another Jain work, the **Bhagavatisutra**[28], in the first battle lasting for ten days, Magadhan army lost one of its general daily at the hands of Cetaka. On the eleventh day, Ajatasatru used **'Mahasilakantaka'** which turned the scale of war and the second battle could be won by **'Rathamusala'** which caused great carnage. According to the **Bhagavatisutra**, there was divine intervention in favour of Ajatasatru and that turned the scale of war; Indra is said to have come to his rescue. The divine intervention is nothing more than a figment of imagination. **Mahasilakantaka** and **Rathamusala** were possibly two deadly war weapons which were, for the first time, used by Ajatasatru against the Lichchavis, who do not seem to have been acquainted with such things. Even this superiority in weapons and armoury did not help Ajatasatru very much as we learn from another Jain source viz. **Avasyakasutracurni**[29] of Jinadasa that the defeat of the Lichchavis was not due to divine intervention only but due to treachery of an ascetic named Kulavalaya,



who was won over by a beautiful prostitute of Ajatasatru. The ruling body of the confederacy broke up and the confederate chieftains went home. Cetaka continued fighting alone.[30] Cetaka preferred death to defeat and committed suicide. Vaisali was conquered. We learn from the **AMMK**[31], that Ajatasatru's dominion included Magadha, Anga, Varanasi and Vaisali. All these wars must have taken place between 491 and 483 BC. There is a good deal of difference of opinion with regard to the date of this event among the scholars. It is said that the confederacy lasted for about 10 or 11 or even 20 years but the war, in any case, could not have continued up to 464 BC as has been suggested in a recent work.[32] Another recent work places the event between 562 and 546 BC, which is impossible.[33]

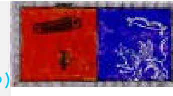
It is believed that the Lichchavis, after this defeat, migrated to Nepal. According to the chronicle **Pag-sam-jon-Zang**, between 4th century and 1st century BC, the king of Tibet came from foreign country and began to rule there. He belonged to **Li-tsa** race which has been identified by some with the Lichchavis. For the present the point is doubtful. One group of the Lichchavis emigrated to Nepal and the other to Tibet. There was close cultural collaboration between peoples of Vaisali and Nepal as early as the sixth century BC.[34] The Lichchavis might have gone to Nepal but they could not make any progress as we find the Kiratas ruling over there. The Kiratas ruled up to the southern tracts of the Himalayas and also over the thin strip of north-eastern India.[35]The importance of Vaisali did not diminish. It continued to be the secondary capital of the Magadhan empire[36], and it seems that in their internal matters they had full autonomy. Vaisali remained an important centre of administration. It was impossible for the Lichchavis to raise their heads during the days of mighty Mauryan empire.[37]Between the fall of the Mauryas and the rise of the Guptas, they seem to have maintained a precarious existence and to have witnessed various ups and downs in their political life. During this period they entrenched themselves successfully in the valley of Nepal and established political power. In the first quarter of the fourth century AD, the curtain rises again and the marriage of Kumaradevi with Chandragupta I marked the beginning of the Gupta empire.

CHAPTER IV

MITHILA BETWEEN 185 BC AND 320 AD

THE SUNGAS: From the coins and other sources, it is evident that in 185 BC, the Magadhan Empire was reduced to almost the area round about Pataliputra and Vidisa. The successors of Asoka were too weak and powerless to maintain a strong centre against the crumbling of the Mauryan state and thus a way was paved for the rise of a new power, parochial in conception and militant in attitude. There was no single political authority in India. Like an adroit successful stage-manager, Pusyamitra Sunga arranged an army review to be inspected by the king at which the king's head was severed from the trunk by the general.[1] He occupied the throne of Magadha in 188-9 BC and he is said to have ruled for thirty-six years. The dominion boasted of the famous cities like Pataliputra, Vidisa and Ayodhya. Besides, the empire also included Bihar, Tirhut and the modern provinces of Agra and Oudh. Patanjali mentions the Videhas as a republic[2] and the Lichchavis as Janapadas. The emperor continued to reside at Pataliputra. It seems that whole of the Himalayan region including Mithila, Vaisali and other parts of north-eastern India was under the control of Pusyamitra. Silver coins of a Sunga prince, named Sumitra, have been found in western part of Nepal.[3]It is presumed that the Kiratas assumed their independence after the Mauryas in Nepal. After Sthumiko, Ganje (140 BC) became the king of Nepal. He was a contemporary of Sunga king Agnimitra. It was during this period that the Sungas gained foothold in western Nepal. Coins of Sumitra and Vasumitra have also been found there. It is possible that the early Sungas with their bases in North Bihar might have exercised suzerainty over Nepal. The continuous line of the Kirata house entitles us to assume a continuous autonomy and this is proved by the existence of some coins of the imperial and local rulers, especially of Sivapalita.

Three Vaisali terracottas have been assigned to the Sunga period.[4] In Vaisali, very interesting and varied specimens of terracotta-male, female and animal figurines have been found. These figurines give insight into the fashion of the day and are remarkable specimens of the Sunga and post-Sunga periods. Sunga terracotta has been discovered from Naulagarh, and another post-Sunga terracotta from Jaimanglagarh. The existence of Sunga rule in North Bihar is proved beyond doubt but we have no clesr picture about the actual political set-up of these regions. If Patanjali is to be relied upon, Vaisali was relegated to a most insignificant position of a Janapada while Videha continued to be a republic. Pusyamitra was a leader of the Brahmanical revival and it was during his reign that Brahmanism replaced Buddhism. The Ajivikaism had become insignificant as early as the Sunga period. The Sungas were the followers of the Krsna-Yajurveda[5] and as such they were bound to be popular in Mithila which was then a centre of the Yajurveda. Pusyamitra belonged to the well-known family of the Bhardwaja.[6] Since Mithila was the centre of Yajurveda, a fact still maintained by the traditional Yajurvedi village, Yajuar, it is only natural that the people of North Bihar acclaimed the advent of a Brahmin power, heralded by the victory of Pusyamitra Sunga. As a militant champion of Brahmanism, he revived the system of Aswamedha sacrifice. His vigorous policy was not apparently maintained by his successors, and for long the republican and monarchical states lived semi-independent of the central power. According to Patanjali,

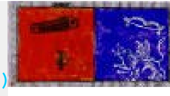


Pusyamitra Sunga was the undisputed master of northern India.[7] The invasion of the Sakas[8] and the Andhras inundated the Gangetic plain and swamped out of existence whatever remained of the central Mauryan power in North Bihar or Mithila as it was popularly known.

THE KANVAS: We have no definite information about the actual territorial expansion of the Kanvas in Mithila. Possibly they were confined to Magadha alone, though the **Puranas** speak of them as 'enjoying allegiance of the feudatories'.[9] It should be taken only as a conventional compliment to a ruling family in Magadha and nothing more. The question arises as to who could be their feudatories? It is true that the suzerainty of Magadha was lost by the descendants of the Sungas because of their moral depravity but that does not mean that they altogether disappeared from the stages of Indian history. They continued to rule in Vidisa and as such could not be expected to acknowledge the overlordship of their erstwhile servants. Dr Raichoudhury believes that the 'later Kanvas succeeded in extending their frontier to the Godavari or even further to the south'[10], but here we have to bear in mind that there is no such mention in the **Puranas**. The states in northern India appear to be independent. The Kanva rule was short-lived and they were swept away from the scene by the Andhra-Satavahanas. Magadha seems to be under the Andhra-Satavahanas in 27 BC.

EXTENT OF GREEK RULE IN BIHAR & THE POSSIBILITY OF ITS EXPANSION IN MITHILA: It has been held by a number of scholars that the decline of the Mauryan power was followed by a Yavana raid in Madhyadesa. The Gargi-Samhita says: "Then viciously valiant Yavanas, after reducing Saket, Panchal and Mathura, will reach Kusumadhvaja."[11] Demetrios, the Indo-Greek contemporary of Pusyamitra, is possibly mentioned in the **Hathigumpha inscription** of Kharavela as yavanaraja D. MI.[12] The memory of the Greek invasion was still green when Patanjali was writing his **Mahabhasya**. He has described the yavanas as **Arunadyavanah Saketam**.[13] The yavanas under the leadership of Demetrios occupied Pataliputra immediately after the murder of Brihadaratha. This would show that the army review, referred to in the **Harsacharita**, was for special purpose to meet the invading barbarians. Demetrios might have occupied Pataliputra in 187 BC.[14] Possibly the invasion of Eucratides (175 BC) caused the abandonment of Pataliputra.[15]From the **Mahabhasya**, it is evident that the yavana occupation of Saket took place before Pusyamitra performed his Asvamedha sacrifice. The recent Kumhrar excavations have proved beyond doubt that the Mauryan pillared hall containing characteristic Sunga sculptures and pottery, was broken and set on fire before the Sunga period is reached. This tends to corroborate the evidence of the **Yugapurana** of the great battle fought in the city against the Greeks who might have destroyed Mauryan buildings and monuments.[16] Ksemendra has preserved a tradition about 'the Buddha prophesying to Indra that king Milinda would erect a stupa at Pataligrama.'[17]

Dharmamitra has been identified with Demetrios. It is said that the waters of several rivers, the Ganges, the Indus, the Iravati, the Visakh, the Vetravati, the Suvarna, the Kausiki and the Saraswati would be dried up on account of drought. There would be atheists and men of un-Brahmanical behaviour.[18] The fact that the Indo-Greeks conquered India seems to be a reality and Menander, if he really crossed the Hypanis (Beas) and reached the Isamus, he conquered more than Alexander.[19] Isamus has been identified by Dr Raichoudhury with Trisama. In the **Bhagawatapurana** (V.19.17), a river of this name is mentioned in conjunction with the Kausiki, Mandakini and Yamuna. If these identifications be taken as correct, then the yavana's association with Bihar in general and North Bihar in particular, stands



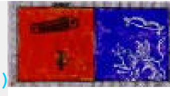
vindicated. One of the Sunga terracottas of Vaisali has a head with a certain amount of Hellenistic modelling.

DID KHARAVELA AFFECT MITHILA?

Brihastipatimitra, mentioned as one of the descendants of Asoka in the **Divyavadana**, was the king of Magadha when the latter was attacked by Kharavela. Dr Panigrahi thinks that this second attack of Magadha by Kharavela took place in 147 BC, when Pusyamitra's rule would have just ended. During the hey-day of Pusyamitra's rule, it was impossible for Kharavela to attack Pataliputra. Political condition of Magadha after Pusyamitra's death is extremely obscure as we know that several branches of his family established themselves in different parts of India, while it is believed that Pataliputra, with its surrounding areas, remained in possession of a scion of the Mauryan dynasty. The existence of a Mauryan ruling family at Pataliputra as late as the seventh century AD is attested by Ywan-Chwang.[20] Uttarapatha in the Hathigumpha inscription seems to have been used in a general way for northern India. He led his armies into the northern plains and watered his horses and elephants in the river Ganges. The expedition is claimed to have been singularly successful. The enormous wealth looted from Magadha was spent on building a magnificent temple adorned with beautiful towers.

As Oriya MSS of the **Brahmandapurana** gives a statement to the effect that Kharavela led an expedition to Nepal.[21] Kharavela's visit to Rajgrha is an indication of the fact that he must have touched the fringe of the river-border (Ganges) of North Bihar even if we reject the unconfirmed statement about his expedition into Nepal. In the twelfth year of his reign, he brought treasures from Anga and Magadha (**EI** – XX – 79-80). Since Anga also included a portion of North Bihar, it is likely that the tremor of his shaking campaign might have been indirectly felt in North Bihar. If his expedition to Nepal be taken for granted, it can be suggested that he possibly passed through North Bihar. These are only mere conjectures and probabilities and it is not possible to agree with the latest writer on the subject that 'Pataliputra and the adjoining territories (Tithut etc.) were subordinated by Kharavela and the rulers of northern India probably ruled as vassal kings and paid tributes to the Kalinga emperor.'[22] In the present state of our knowledge, it is difficult to agree with this vague generalisation. The epigraphic sources supply us with incomplete information about the existence of Mitra rule in Magadha and the neighbouring provinces.[23]There was no empire of the Sungas after Pusyamitra. North India was studded with local states without any political cohesion or authority. According to Rapson, the successors of Pusyamitra were in no way connected with the royal city of Pataliputra. It is doubtful if Bahastimitra of Hathigumpha inscription represented the remnant of a Sunga power.

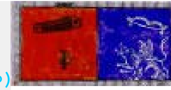
THE ANDHRA-SATAVAHANAS: According to the **Puranas**, Magadha after the fall of the Kanvas, passed to the Andhra-Satavahanas. They are said to have uprooted not only the Kanvas but whatever was left of the power of the Sungas. Spooner notices a Satavahana coin at Kumhrar. Whatever be the nature and extent of their rule in Bihar, it is evident that their rule did not last for more than fifty years at Pataliputra, i.e., after 31 BC. The Nepal inscriptions of Lichchavi Jayadeva II[24] of 758 AD inform us that one of his ancestors Supuspa Lichchavi was born at the city of Pataliputra in the beginning of the Christian Era. This particular inscription hints at the possibility of the occupation of Pataliputra by the Lichchavis of Nepal in the beginning of the Christian Era. The Lichchavis had aspired to do so for



centuries. Jayaswal has suggested that the disturbances caused to the Satavahana Empire by the appearance of Kadphises and Weima Kadphises in northern India afforded an opportunity to the Lichchavis to fill up the vacuum at Pataliputra. The Lichchavis continued to advance till they were checked by Vanasphara, the Kusana Viceroy of Magadha.[25] The Satavahana conquest of Magadha does not seem to have resulted in permanent occupation. If they ruled at all they ruled for a very brief period and ultimately left Magadha to its own fate. For the present we have no positive evidence to suggest the occupation of Tirhut by the Satavahanas. If the Lichchavis filled up the vacuum at Pataliputra, as is generally believed, the natural conclusion seems to be that they (Lichchavis) were possibly in possession of Vaisali at that time. The meagre sources at our disposal do not enable us to present a clear picture that was then obtaining in the political horizon of North Bihar.

THE EXTENT OF KUSANA RULE IN MITHILA: The rise of the Kusanas in Indian history constitutes a landmark in the annals of our cultural progress. Kaniska was the most important king of this dynasty. It was he who extended the frontier of the Kusana Empire from Khotan to Pataliputra. Epigraphic evidences tend to show that he came into conflict with the rulers of Saket and Pataliputra in eastern India.[26]The traditions regarding the Kusana rule in eastern India are preserved in the Chinese sources. Kaniska is credited by the Buddhist writers to have invaded Magadha. Kusana relics and inscriptions have been recently discovered at Kosambi and Kusana coins and amulets have been abundantly found at Gorakhpur, Buxar, Pataliputra, Sultanganj, Belwa, Vaisali and Nepal. A gold coin at Mahasthan represents the standing bearded figure of Kaniska possibly in imitation of the Kusana coinage.[27]The extension of Kusana rule in north and west Bengal would suggest the existence of the Kusana rule in the easternmost part of north Bihar. Jayaswal holds that the occurrence of Kharosthi writing on the Bodhgaya plaque, fire-altar and other Iranian marks discovered at Patna and Basarh by Spooner and at Belwa (Saran) by H Pandya, is explained by the continuance of the Kusana rule in Bihar from the time of Kaniska to that of Vasudeva.[28] The Chinese sources confirm the existence of Kusana rule in Bihar. The **Sridharmapitakanidanasutra** records that Kaniska defeated the king of Pataliputra and accepted Aswaghosha as indemnity.[29] Kaniska also took away Buddha's alms-bowl from north Bihar.[30] It is believed that the venerated alms-bowl of Buddha was taken away from Vaisali to Puruspura.[31] Vaisali was celebrated in the early ages of Buddhism for the possession of alms-boal of the Buddha which he had given to the Lichchavis at Kesariya.[32] Fahien and Ywan Chwang mention this point. Taranath says, "The king of the little Yeuchi invaded Magadha and carried off the bowl of the Buddha."[33]

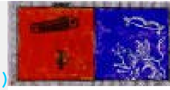
The Chinese translation of Kumaralata's **Kalpanamanditika**, composed shortly after the reign of Kaniska, suggests that Kaniska conquered **Tien-Chuor** in eastern India and pacified the country. **Kiu-sha**, the family name of the Kusanas, of Kumaralata has been identified with Kusadwipa of the **Puranas**. Kaniska has been described as a man of awe-inspiring power.[34] The **Sutralankara** of Aswaghosha seems to refer to the wide extent of the Kusana Empire. The Tibetan and the Chinese writings contain traditions of his conflict with the king of Magadha. The king of Pataliputra offered nine hundred thousand pieces of gold to purchase peace and being unable to amass this huge amount, gave the conqueror alms-bowl of the Buddha. This would suggest that the ruler of Pataliputra was also the ruler of Vaisali. These Chinese and other texts contain some allusions to his reverses in the north and the north-east.



E H Walsh has recorded that a hoard of Kusana coins was dug out in the neighbourhood of Katmandu.[35] They were coins of Weima-Kadphises and Kaniska. Jayaswal believed in the extension of Kusana rule in Nepal.[36] The possibility of the Kusana era being used by the Lichchavis of Nepal tends to support the continuance of Kusana rule in these areas. It has been pointed out that the meagre evidence do not indicate any real political subjugation of Nepal to the Kusanas.[37] Regmi, on the other hand, has pointed out that the coins of Kadphises I and II proved that these two Kusana emperors had Nepal under their control.[38] Possibly it was through Champaran that the Kusanas extended their sway up to Nepal. The discovery of the Kusana coins in Champaran indicates their authority in that region. A hoard of sixty pieces of copper coins of the early Kusanas was dug out at Radhiya, the village which is marked by a pillar of Asoka. These discoveries enable us to arrive at the conclusion that the Kusanas not only extended their authority up to Vaisali but also up to Nepal. Kusana coins have also been discovered from Belwa in Saran district.[39]Some pieces of Kaniska type and a distinct coin of Kadphises II were discovered from Basarh in 1913-14. These coins mark the most eastern point in the distribution of Kadphises II's coinage. Altekar has pointed out that the Kusana copper coins did not travel to central or western India by trade and "if therefore, they are found to be fairly numerous at Vaisali and Pataliputra, if a hoard almost exclusively consisting of them, is found at Buxar consisting of coins extremely worn out, the conclusion seem to be irresistible that Magadha was conquered by the Kusanas early in their dynastic history."[40] It was probably Weima Kadphises who conquered north India. Seals, bearing the inscription '**Hastadevasya**' in Kusana script, have been discovered from Vaisali.[41] Kaniska gave patronage to and spread the teaching of Buddha in India, Kashgar, Kuch, Nepal, China, Yunan and other countries.[42] Even the coins of some kings of Nepal are unmistakable adaptations of such familiar Kusana types as a "king sacrificing at the altar". All these evidence are unmistakably in favour of the fact that the whole of North Bihar was under the Kusanas and we can agree with the assertion that "they extended as far as Tirhut and its neighbouring tracts."[43]

For the administrative convenience the Kusana Empire was broken into parts and kept under the Imperial Viceroys. The eastern portion of the empire was apparently governed by Mahaksatrapa Kharapallana and ksatrapa Vanasphara. Jayaswal believes that Vanasphara has been described in the **Puranas** as a barbarian ruler in Magadha with Mongol features. These two governors are known to us from the **Sarnath Inscription**. Vanasphara was the governor of Oudh and Magadha with headquarters at Banaras and in the year 81 AD, he was in-charge of the province of the north-east.[44] Vanasphara has been spelt in the **Puranas** as Viswaphatika, Viswaphani and Vimsaphati.[45] He ruled Magadha between 90 and 120 AD. [46] He was in-charge of the north-eastern provinces. This name may be connected with the Banasphara Rajputas whose original home is suggested by Sir George Abraham Grierson to have been at Buxar.[47]A member of this community rose to great eminence in Magadha.[48] They rendered useful services to the Kusanas in regard to the administration of the eastern provinces. These facts enable us to conclude that the Kusanas were in enjoyment of the full parasol of sovereignty to North Bihar where possibly they had established a viceroyalty on account of the nearness of the valley of Nepal.[49]

MAROUNDAI OF PTOLEMY AND THE PROBLEM OF THE SAKA-MURUNDA IN THE HISTORY OF MITHILA: It has been held by a recent writer that the Mitras in Magadha were replaced by the Scythian Murudas and Sakas in Pataliputra.[50] The acceptance of the Saka era as our national era even today is indicative of



the fact that the Sakas were in possession of this country for a considerable period. The era must have come into use long after the occupation of this country by them. In North Bihar the people clung to this era even when there were other eras in use. The dissolution of the Indo-Greeks in the north-west facilitated the advance of the Parthians, the Murundas and the Sakas. If the **Yugapurana** is to be relied upon, soon after the Sungas, the Sakas overran northern India.[51]

Geographer Ptolemy supplies us with some interesting detail about a people, with a definite area, known as Maroundai. Among the tributaries to the Ganges, Ptolemy refers to Bepyrrhoz. He also refers to Kausiki.[52] Maroundai occupied an extensive territory which comprised Tirhut. Mundas originally belonged to the hill men of the north and are to be identified with Monedes of whom Pliny speaks. They were connected with the Murundas, a people of Lampaka, as mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta.[53] According to the **Vayupurana**, the Murundas belonged to the Mlecha tribe. The town of Muroundai lay possibly between Maldah and lower valley of the Bagmati and the Gandaki.[54] Ptolemy brings to light the specific features of the hill tribes of north India and says, "Between the Imaos and Bepyrrhos ranges Takoraioi are the farthest north and below them are Korangkaloi, then the Passalai (identified with Vaisali by Cunningham[55]), after whom to the north of Maiandros are Tiladai, such being the name applied to Boseidai, for they are short of stature and broad and shaffy, and broad faced but of fair complexion."[56] Passalai is to be identified with Vaisali of Hiuen-tsang, a kingdom stretching from the Ganges along the banks of river Gandaka. Ptolemy has also referred to a small village of Salempur on the Gandaki[57] and another place connected with this river was Kondota.[58]

Line 23 of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription refers to the Saka-Murundas. Dr Sten Konow has pointed out that Murunda is the later form of a Saka word meaning Lord or Master. According to Hemachandra[59], the Lampakas were also known as Murundas (Lampakastu murundahasyu). Lampaka was the capital of the Sakas. According to Ptolemy the Saka-Murudas seem to have extensive territory, probably the whole of north Bihar on the east bank of the Ganges as far as the head of the delta. They had six important cities[60]. The **Puranas** mention Sakas and Murundas separately.[61] The Chinese sources give a brief history of the Murundas of Kipin.[62]From the combined testimony of the Jainas and the Chinese writers as well as Ptolemy, it appears that Murundas held sway over a considerable part of eastern India. In the age of Ptolemy, Gangaridae confronted a powerful tribe, the Maroundae. The limits of the region occupied by the Maroundae at this time may be defined with some precision. They lived to the south of the territory from Uttarakosala to the upper course of the Saryu or Ghaghara. The Maroundae lived along the eastern side of the Upper Gangetic course which included Mithila, extended from the Gandaka to the Mahananda and reached the apex of the Gangetic delta.[63] Levi has also given a very interesting details about the Murudas in India.[64] L Renou does not consider the six cities, referred to by Ptolemy, B C Law and Levi, as belonging to the Murundas.[65] The Jain tradition maintains that Pataliputra was under the rule of the Murundas.[66] According to the **Puranas**, Viswaphani ruled over Magadha before the rise of the Guptas.[67] Some **MSS** of the **Vayupurana** bring the Kaivarttas into prominence.[68] We learn from the Jain version of the **Simhanadatrimsika** that the city of Pataliputra was under the sway of Murundaraja. We learn that Padalipta cured king Murunda of Pataliputra of his terrible headache.[69] Levi has shown that an

echo of the Jain tradition is also found in the Chinese works.[70] According to another legend a Murunda king was the master of thirty-six hundred thousand people of Kannauj.[71]

The **Sai-wang** of the Chinese extracts evidently denotes Saka lord. Wang is a Chinese translation of Saka word Murunda which occur in the Brahmi and Kharosthi inscriptions of the early centuries of the Christian Era in the sense of Lord or King. Patanjali's comment on Panini's **Sutra** (II.4.10) indicates that the Sakas at the time of the commentator were living with the Yavanas outside the limits of Aryavarta. The **Ramayana** places the settlement of the Sakas along with the Kambojas and the Yavanas in the extreme north beyond the **Surasenas**, **Prasthalas**, **Bharatas**, **Kurus** and **Madrakas**, while the **Mahabharata** locates them along with the **Pahalavas**, **Barabaras**, **Kiratas** and the **Yavanas** in the extreme north-west, beyond Sakala, the capital of the Madras.[72] The **Harivamsa** gives a characteristic description of the Sakas who used to shave half of their heads.[73] The medieval Jain work **Kalaskacharyaksthanaka** informs us that Kalaka, who had grudge against the Malava king Gardhabhila, went to Sagakula and induced the Saka chiefs called Shahis owing allegiance to an overlord called Shahanushahi (overlord) to accompany him to Hindukadesa. Crossing the Indus, they proceeded to Surasthra **visaya** and divided that country amongst themselves. Then Kalaka led them to Gardhabhila's **capital, Ujjain. Gardhabhila was defeated and imprisoned and a new line of Saka kings began in Malwa.** The Saka dynasty was later on uprooted by Vikramaditya, founder of Vikrama era.[74] This refers to an early Scythic settlement in parts of western and central India. Similar settlements in the north are alluded to in the Kharosthi inscriptions. There is explicit mention of the Saka occupation of Kipin (Kashmir) in the Chinese sources. Levi and Chavannes identified Kipin with Kashmir.

The **Gargi-Samhita** preserves an account of the rule of the Sakas on the river Sipra. Section 15 of the same work preserves an account of the depredations of the Sakas. According to Jayaswal, the Saka invasion took place in about 100 BC. They were no other than the Satraps of Mathura. On the authority of the **AMMK**, it has been pointed out that the Saka-Vamsa had thirty rulers out of whom eighteen kings are known to be the emperors of Madhyadesa. According to Jayaswal the reference is to the Kusanas. He believes that the foreigners had penetrated the Ganges. The **Chandragarbha-Pariprichcha**, cited by Buston in his **History of the Buddhist Doctrine** says, "Mahendra's kingdom (Skandagupta Mahendraditya) was invaded upon by three powers in concert, Yavanas (Hunas according to Jayaswal), Pahalikas (Sansanians-Pahalavikas according to Jayaswal) and Sakunas (Kusana-Sakas according to Jayaswal). They took possession of Gandhar and countries to the north of the Ganges.[75]

The Maroundae of Ptolemy cannot be connected with Lampaka Murunda nor with the Mundas, but it can be connected with the Makadas, Maladas and Mandas of the epics and the **Puranas**.[76] They are also mentioned in the **Ramayana** as **Malajas** occupying the district of Shahabad originally but dislodged by demonese Tadka and then migrated to the east and settled in the district of Maldah.[77] **Takoraioi** of Ptolemy seems to be a tribe and may be identified with one mentioned in the Brahmi inscription at Basarh, which reads as "**Anusamayakatakare**".[78] This has been translated as "seal of the Vaisali Police at Takara". Reading of this particular seal has been done in a peculiar manner and hence it cannot be taken as certain. The reading of another seal is "**Amratakeswara**"[79]. This seal bears the figure of a **Linga** with a **Trisula**. It may also indicate a distinct tribe. No definite solution of these seals can be presented in the present state of our knowledge. There is no definite evidence to show that the Sakas ever conquered

North Bihar. Ptolemy's reference to the occupation of North Bihar by the Saka-Murundas might have been based upon some solid evidence now lost to us. We cannot reject Ptolemy outright. The author of the **Gargi-Samhita** had possibly some faithful record of historical chronicle before him and the point stands further confirmed when we see that Varahamihir quotes him as an established authority.[80] The association of the Kiratas with the Sakas enables us to infer that the Saka-Murundas were in occupation of a very thin strip of land in the north-eastern India stretching from the hills of the Himalayas to Maldah in North Bengal.

Dr B C Sen has identified 'Mandaloy' of Ptolemy with Mandladhipati but his findings are not open and above board and it has been rightly questioned by another scholar on the ground that 'Mandaloy' and 'Maroundae' are one and synonymous[81], and they may have played no insignificant part in the politics of eastern India after the disintegration of the Kusana empire. From the combined testimony of the Jainas, the Chinese writers and Ptolemy, it appears that a considerable portion of ancient India was under the Murundas in the second and third centuries AD. Half a century after Ptolemy, Oppien mentions 'Maruandien' people as a Gangetic people living in the Indian plains. Levi's account of the Murundas is not supported by Renou who mentions six cities of Ptolemy as lying between the country of Marundai and that of the Gangaridae. An echo of the Jain tradition of the occupation of Pataliputra by the Murundas is also found in the Chinese works. During the rule of the Wu dynasty (220-277 AD), the king of Funan (Cambodia) named Fanchen sent one of his relatives Su-Wu as ambassador to India. The mention of 'Meou-Loun' is important here in the sense that Levi identifies it with the Murundas. Sen holds that the Murundas were in possession of an extensive territory extending from Gorakhpur to Bengal. They were possibly Viceroys under the Kusanas and they took the earliest opportunity in carving out independent kingdom after the decline of the Kusanas. As soon as the bow of Ulysses was weakened the provinces raised their heads and asserted independence. Vasudeva was not strong enough to extend his authority, nor powerful to preserve what he had inherited.

THE BHARS OF MITHILA: The Bhars of North Bihar are associated with the Naga-Bharasivas. The Bhars are even today found in UP and Bihar. It is believed and preserved in their folk-tradition that they were once the rulers in the plains. According to Grooke, they were of Dravidian origin.[82] Risley believes that the Bhars of Bihar were a hinduised branch of the original stock. The Bhars of Bihar claim affinity with the Bhars of North-Western provinces. Mythic tales and legends have surrounded their origin. The **Uberae** of Megasthenes have been referred to as the Bhars.[83]The reference to Maroundae is particularly interesting inasmuch as it shows them linked up with north Bihar in the second century AD. According to Megasthenes, as reported by Pliny, the **Molindae** formed a group with the **Modubae**, **Uberae**, **Galmodreesi Preti**, **Calissae**, **Sasuri**, **Passalae**, **Colubae**, **Orxulae**, **Abali** and the **Taluctae**. These tribes may have chiefly occupied the 'region between left bank of the Ganges and the Himalayas.'[84] The Bhars were known even as early as the days of Megasthenes. They are said to have been the former rulers.[85]Their connection with the Bharsivas is indicated. According to Smith, some Rajaputas are descended from the Bhars and the Chandelas Rajaputas are originally hinduised Bhars. Smith does not accept the Dravidian origin of the Bhars. It has been rightly pointed out by Magrath that they are now one of the most degraded races of Bihar. Oppert has pointed out that their sway continued till the

twelfth century AD. Popular tradition lends support to a view that a Bhar chief established a Phallus of Siva in the Barabar hills of Gaya district.

The Bhars in north Bihar claim their descent from the Bharsivas who are said to have reached the Ganges through Baghelkhand. Smith took them to be former rulers.[86]A popular tradion, current among the Bhars, says that when the Saka-Scythians invaded India, the responsibility of driving them out fell upon the shoulders of Bhars. They not only saved India but also preserved the Siva cult. The predominance of Siva worship and their close association with the Phallus worship may point to a period when the ides of Trinity was complete and had come to stay in our social set-up. Today though they are the most degraded race in some parts of north Bihar, they have faithfully maintained their tradition in the shape of some social customs like Siva worship etc. The remains of the Bhars in north Bihar are in Champaran, Begusarai, Madhipura and other parts of Tirhut.[87] The north-eastern portion of Begusarai is believed to have been long under the sway of the Bhars, traces of which are still found in the ruined forts of **tappa** Saraunja.[88] Raibhira in Madhipura sub-division was another centre of the Bhars and there were about six mounds which were only recently eroded by the river Kosi. There is even now a good part of Bhar population at Raibhira, near Singheswarasthan in Madhipura subdivision of the Saharsa district. The place is important from the point of view of religion as well. Stray objects are occasionally found. Thakur is out to prove anything and everything in North Bihar and has therefore tried to deduce conclusions which have hardly any bearing on historical evidence of facts. While he has devoted three pages to this problem, it is not clear as to what he likes to say. Though there is no positive evidence to show whether the Naga-Bharasiva ruled over North Bihar or not, it can be suggested with some amount of certainty that some portions of north Bihar were under the sway of the Bhars. It seems that the Bhars later on associated themselves with the Bharasivas.

LICHCHAVIS OF VAISALI AND NEPAL: The dynasty which ruled in Vaisali was descended from Manu's son Nabhanedistha. Pramati or Sumati of the dynasty was a contemporary of Siradhwaja Janaka of Mithila and Dasaratha of Ayodhya. Pargitar has given the name of thirty four kings and some extra names have now been also incorporated. The dynasty of Vaisali does not seem to have attained much distinction. From the end of the reign of Sumati or Pramati to the beginning of the republican system, there is a long period of about six centuries which may be termed as a dark age in the history of Vaisali. Possibly during the period Vaisali formed part of Videha. The Lichchavis ushered in a new era of republicanism.

In the age of the sixteen Mahajanapadas there flourished in north Bihar the republican states of the Vajjis and the Mallas who formed the most important groups. Out of the ten republics, mentioned in the Buddhist literature, proceeding from north to south and west to east, the following seven occupied an area which may be termed as Gorakhpur – Tirhut region extending from Rapti to Vagmati-Kausiki:

i. The Sakyas of Kapilavastu;
ii. The Koliyas of Ramagama;
iii. The Moriyas of Pippalivana;
iv. The Mallas of Kusinagar;
v. The Mallas of Pava;
vi. The Lichchavis of Vaisali; and

vii. The Videhas of Mithila.

According to the **Divyavadana**, they all belonged to the Ksatriya family.

The Lichchavis were the most powerful clans of the Vajjian territory and had their capital at Vaisali. The end of the Janaka dynasty in about 725 BC may possibly be taken as the date of the foundation of the Vajjian republic. The territory of this republic extended from Ganga to the Nepal hills and from the Gandaka to the outskirts of the Kosi and Mahananda. In the heyday of its glory, the Vajjian republic included the following areas of north Bihar:

i. East and West Champaran;
ii. Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi and Vaisali;
iii. Nepalese Terai extending from Champaran to Saharsa-Purnea region;
iv. Samastipur and the area extending up to Kamala-Balan region in the districts of Darbhanga and Madhubani;
v. A narrow rectangular strip bordering the Ganga in the south and going to the eastern direction up to Anguttarap region.[89]

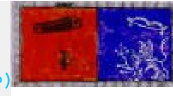
The Vajjian constitution is one of the earliest examples of the oligarchic republic in human history. The Lichchavi constitution is detailed in the **Attakatha**. The three or four highest officers included:

i. Raja (President);
ii. Uparaja (Vice-President);
iii. Senapati (Generalissimo); and
iv. Bhandagarika (Chancellor of the Exchequer).

These are mentioned in **Jataka** I. P. 504. Possibly they composed the cabinet or the central executive authority. They had to perform executive, military and judicial functions. These were all elective posts.

The Central Legislature consisted of 7,707 members. Each member was called a **Raja**.[90]The rulers of the republic underwent the ceremony of consecration by anointing. There was a coronation tank at the city of Vaisali. The place where the central legislative assembly met was called **Santhagara**. The tocsin used to be sounded on the arrival of the members. They discussed not only politics but also agriculture, commerce and religion. The **Gana** was the sovereign body. It transacted business on behalf of the whole people and appointed members of the Executive Council and other functionaries. The judicial system was unique.[91]An accused had to pass through seven stages and any of the seven courts cpould acquit him. Liberty of the citizen was most zealously guarded.

The defeat of the Lichchavis at the hands of Ajatasatru left them powerless and we know very little of their subsequent history. Kautilya's reference to the Lichchavis, living under a Samgha form of government, enables us to suggest that they probably maintained their democratic institution, even under the Mauryas. Vaisali continued to be an important Buddhist centre. In the early Christian Era, the Lichchavis and the Mallas probably sought the safety of the hills of Nepal during the period of political troubles in India caused by the foreign inroads and internal wars.[92] The history of Nepal between 110



and 205 AD, the date of the establishment of Lichchavi power, is practically blank. The suggestion that Kusanas filled up the gap is wide of the mark. How and when the Kirata rule came to an end in Nepal, we do not know. In the **Brhatakatha** of Gunadhya, there is a reference to Raja Yasaketu ruling the city of Siva in Nepaladesa.[93] It is believed that Nepal was conquered by an Indian king, Nimisha, whose dynasty ruled for about 145 years. The so-called Nimisha dynasty was overthrown by the Lichchavis.

Jayaswal suggests that seven rulers before Jayadeva I were rulers obviously in the plains at Vaisali. They annexed Nepal in about 200 AD and established a direct government. Thus there seems to have been a gap in the history of Nepal between the Kirata and Lichchavi epochs (110-205 AD). It is not filled up by the written history of Nepal. From the **Vamsavali** and other sources, it appears that the Kirata rule in Nepal was followed by the Somavamsi and Suryavamsi rulers. It is with the Suryavamsi Lichchavis that the historical period of Nepal begins. The date of the foundation of Lichchavi power in Nepal cannot be determined with any amount of precision. The inscriptions of Nepalese Lichchcavis range between 386 and 535 of an unspecified era. D C Sirkar refers them to Saka era and in that case the earliest Lichchavi inscription can be dated 464 AD .[94] It refers not only to Lichchavi king Manadeva but also to his three predecessors Dharmadeva, Samkaradeva and Vrsabhadeva. He holds that Kumaradevi was a daughter of the Lichchavi king of Nepal. The inscription of Jayadeva II refers to the illustrious Lichchavi.[95]

According to Fleet, verse six of the inscription shows that in addition to the appellation of the Lichchavivamsa or the **Lichchavikula**, the family had another original name which is, however, (not?) recorded. It is also mentioned that king Supushpa was born at Pataliputra. Fleet is of the opinion that this part of the inscription relates to a period antecedent to the settlement of the Lichchavis of Nepal. After Supushpa, omitting twenty three kings, there was Jayadeva I who is regarded by Bhagwanlal as the first ruling and really historical member of the family. As no previous Jayadeva is mentioned, **apara** seems to introduce another branch of the Lichchavi family not directly descended from Lichchavi and Supushpa.[96]The Lichchavis might have captured Patalipitra which they had aspired to do for centuries.[97] Kielhorn suggests some connection between Lichchavi and Pushpapura.[98]

It is not definitely known when and how the Lichchavis entered the valley of Nepal. A Nepali scholar suggests that Newars were included in the Vrijji clans.[99]There was a close co-operation between the people of Nepal and Vaisali in the early period. It is evident from different sources that the Lichchavi, even after their being unimportant in Vaisali, ruled for about eight centuries in Nepal with short breaks at intervals. Jayaswal believes that the administration of Nepal between 205 and 305 AD was in the hands of the Lichchavis and they ruled from the plain with capital at Vaisali. Regmi has questioned the validity of the findings of Levi and Fleet and has suggested that Nepal lost its independence for a period of three hundred years from 50 to 350 AD.[100]

On the authority of a Tibetan source, S C Sircar has suggested that Bharsa, son of a Lichchavi king Simha, ruled over Magadha. He says, “In fact the Gupta dynasty is in constitutional law only a Lichchavi dynasty.”[101] We may suggest that the Lichchavis, after the retirement of the Kusanas, had stabilised their position not only in Vaisali but had extended their authority up to Pataliputra and Nepal. Bhaskarvarmana seems to be a historical person of Nepal who conquered a part of north India and was possibly the maternal grandfather of Samudragupta and father-in-law of Chandragupta I. He was

probably till then the president of the republic of Vaisali.[102]The seat of government then changed from Vaisali to Nepal. The Lichchavis continued to be one of the main ruling dynasties of Vaisali and Nepal for centuries as is evidenced by the coins of Chandragupta and also by the fact that he consolidated his position with their help.[103] According to Jayaswal, Kumaradevi was the ddaughter of Bhaskarvarmana who gave in dowry the kingdom of the plains to his son-in-law Chandragupta and Nepal to his son Bhumivarman.

CHAPTER V

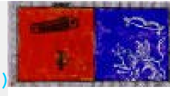
EMERGENCE OF TIRABHUKTI AS THE CAPITAL OF NORTH BIHAR

(320-1097 AD)

The emergence of the Guptas on the scene of Indian history in AD 320 as a result of their matrimonial alliance with the Lichchavis marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Mithila. Videha, Mithila, Vaisali and other minor states of north Bihar now came to be known as Tirabhukti (modern Tirhut) and it became the seat of the provincial administration under the imperial Guptas. Tirabhukti continued to be an important administrative centre of north Bihar for centuries. It was surrounded on the west by Sravasti-bhukti, on the east by the Pundkavardhana-bhukti and on the south by the Srinagara-bhukti. It had its headquarters at Vaisali. The Basarh or Vaisali seals throw a flood of light on the administrative system of Tirabhukti under the Guptas.

Extensive conquests involved the problem of administering those parts with which communications were not easy. Samudragupta, therefore, followed the policy of levying tributes from the defeated rulers of the south and exterminating those of Aryavarta, while the forest chiefs and Frontier kings obeued the imperial commands and performed obeisance. The rehabilitation of royal families, fallen and deprived of sovereignty, was effected through acts of respectful service rendered by them. We have no reference to the exact number of provinces or states in the Gupta Empire and the extent of their boundaries, but it is known from the inscriptions that there were several **Bhuktis** or divisions headed by royal princes or important administrative officers. It is on the basis of available epigraphic data that the pattern of provincial administration can be studied. Vaisali, erstwhile capital of the Lichchavis (whose **dauhitra** Samudragupta was), naturally had a special status.

The Guptas were the legal successors of the Lichchavis of Vaisali and when the administrative set-up was re-organised under Chandragupta II Tirabhukti (old Mithila-Videha regions) was constituted into a Viceroyalty under a crown prince, Govindagupta. Vaisali formed the headquarters of Tirabhukti. The headquarters of the province and district could be located at the same place, in **adhisthanas** with their own offices (**adhikaranas**). Excavations at Basarh (Vaisali) have brought to light numerous clay seals issued by royal prince, Govindagupta, along with those of other officials in his administration, and the prominent citizens and committees.[1] In this collection, there is the seal of Mahadevi Dhruva-Swamini, Queen of Chandragupta II and the mother of Govindagupta. Seals of the officials of the court of Govindagupta are also there. The office of Kumaramatya is significant. The person holding it is also called Yuvaraja with an additional epithet **bhattaraka** on the seal. The appointment of a royal prince as



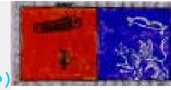
the head of a province is also evident from the Damodarpur[2] copper plate inscription no. 5 (in connection with Pundravardhanabhukti). The terms **Sriparamabhattarakapadiya** and **Yuvarajapadiya** on the seals for the officials called Kumaramatya suggest 'the chief minister in waiting' on the king and the crown prince respectively.[3] The reference to the **Uparika** in **Tirabhukti-Uparikas** may be viewed in the context of the **Uparikas** of the Damodarpur plate inscriptions. **Uparika** was undoubtedly a governor appointed by the king. It had been suggested that the post had something to do with the realisation of **Uparikara**, an additional impost imposed on the peasants in addition to the fixed annual share of produce. **Bhukti** suggests that the territoey placed under his charge was intended to be enjoyed rather than governed by him in its own interest.[4]

The Vaisali seals throw sufficient light on the administration of law and justice. The police work was performed by **Dandapasika**, the judicial function was performed by **Vinayasthitisthapaka** having office in the headquarters of Tirabhukti. Vaisali was an important military headquarter for we find here the seals of the chief commander (**Mahadandanayaka**), the head of the military store (**Suraranabhandagardhikaranasya**), of the office of the commander attached to royal heir apparent and also of the head of the infantry and cavalry.[5] The head of the palace guards (**Mahaprarihara**) may also have been a military functionary. Vaisali was a great centre of political power under the Guptas. Vaisali's administration is known to us from the 274 seals of the bankers, merchants, artisans and others discovered there.

The town administration of Vaisali was well organised and regulated. The **Nigamas** carried on the town administration. The **Nigama** was a wider body, representing not only the chamber of commerce but also a major section of the artisans. They regulated and controlled the economic activities of the area in which they lived. Leading persons from every walk of life were possibly represented in the **Nigama**.[6] The **Nigama** framed its own rules known as **Samayas** and the king was under obligation to maintain the usages settled among them both in rural and urban areas. Vaisali **Nigamas** enjoyed a large measure of autonomy. Their status was better than their counterparts in Pataliputra as is evident from the **Mudraraksas**. A kind of **parisad** also functioned in the vicinity of Vaisali – **parisad** of Udanakupa. It formed an important element of the machinery of the local government. The various guilds participated in the local administration.

The governance of a province involved shouldering of heavy responsibilities. The head was expected to be modest (**Vinita**), upright (**Satya**), straightforward (**Arjava**) and above all temptations (**Vrsudha**). The provincial headquarter was known as **Adhikarana** and it had a number of officials in hierarchical order. The officer **Kumaramatya**, attached to the provincial head, carries the curious title of **Yuvaraja** coupled with another title **bhattaraka**. These two titles (**Yuvaraja** and **bhattaraka**) are also associated with the head of the forces – **baladhikarana**. Various other officers enumerated above were connected with the provincial administration of Tirabhukti. In one of the Gupta inscriptions there is a reference to three **Kumaramatyas** to whom the **dutaka** communicated the royal gift and the karanakayastha Naradatta, the scibe who held the office of **Sandhivigrahaka**.

THE POST-GUPTA PERIOD: A study of the administrative system between the fall of the Guptas and the rise of the Karanatas reveals the continuance of the pattern, with emphasis, of course, on the



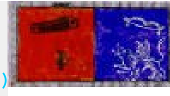
feudalisation of the administration at all levels. There were some modifications over the Gupta pattern. Feudatory chiefs (**Samantas** and **Mahasamantas**) began to function as provincial chiefs. Conflict for supremacy among the feudal chiefs became a regular feature. The services of feudal chiefs could be requisitioned for civil administration. Feudal disintegration followed the decline of the Gupta Empire and with a short respite under Harsha the disruptive forces raised their heads again.

After the decline of the Gupta Empire and before the establishment of the Karnatas, a considerable portion of Bihar was parcelled out among vassals who owed allegiance to the Gaudas, Harsha or local Magadhan kings of unknown identity. We have no information from any reliable authority about the actual administrative set-up of Tirabhukti during this period. Under the later Guptas the Rajamatyas were preceded only by the **Rajaputras** and followed by all the high officials. Under the later Guptas, Tirabhukti continued as an administrative unit and that Chamunda Visaya was under its administrative control. The Krmila Visaya (under Srinagarabhukti) extended over both sides of the river Ganga and as such formed, at least nominally, part of Tirabhukti. [7] The later Gupta officials are described as subsisting on the favour of the feet of the king.[8] On account of the weakness of the central authority, the administrative system was marked by decentralisation and feudalisation.

Tirabhukti continued to be administrative headquarters under the Palas and parts of Sravasti, Pudravardhana and Srinagara bhuktis included portion of a fringe of north Bihar. Tirabhukti had a number of **Visayas**, viz., **Kaksa**, **Hodrey**, **Chamunda** and a part of **Krmila**.[9] The Viasyas of Tirabhukti were administrative units north of the Ganges and this also held good of Krmila which covered area on both sides of the Ganga. It served as headquarters of some offices and was hence known as Krmila **adhisthana**. The head of the province now came to be known as **Rajasthaniyoparika**. This title made the office of the Governor more exalted and powerful.

The Pala system of administration was more comprehensive and efficient and had organs of a more differentiated character. The Pala records have more than two dozen officials. The increase in the number of various grades of officials was possible because of the smaller size of their kingdom. **Rajasthaniyoparika** represents the Viceroy or the provincial governor. He served as the deputy of the king in the province. He was also connected with the revenue administration. The mergence of feudal elements in Pala polity is discernible. Even Nanyadeva was possibly the head of the vassals under the Chalukyas and retained the title of Mahasamantadhipati even after he set up his independent kingdom. Mahamandalika Samgramagupta, possibly a vassal under the Karnatas, maintained independent administrative machinery consisting of about two dozen officials. Though the names of some officials are obscure, the designations are too pretentious, apparently meant to satisfy feudal sense of prestige and vanity. The Panchobh copper plate of Samgramagupta is indicative of the growing importance of the landed feudal elements in day-to-day administration. The urban and mercantile interests were also associated with the administration. The scribe had also emerged powerful in the then administrative set-up. The rulers had begun to depend more and more on their subordinates. Samgramagupta's charter begins by seeking the consent of his officers.

I. A NEW GUPTA SEAL FROM NAULAGARH (BEGUSARAI)[10]: In course of usual digging of the mounds by the agricultural labourers in 1972 at Naulagarh, the seal under reference, was discovered. The present



seal, under study, belongs to the Gupta period and is more important as it gives us an account of the fact that the area around Naulagarh was one of the main centres of administration in those days.

The present seal has two lines. There is a sign of a big tree above the inscribed portion on the seal. It might have been an insignia of the administrative office or a common insignia prevalent in this part of Bihar as we find a similar tree on the seal discovered from Kumrahar in 1951. The letters of the seal under study have got box head of the Gupta character and letters resemble the Gupta script. The reading of the seal is:

Line 1 – RAKSHAMUKTA VISHAYA (LAKSA ....?)

Line 2 – ADHIKARANASYA

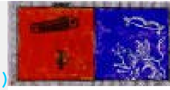
This is the seal of the administrative office of the district called Raksamukta or Laksamukta. We have a similar seal in one of the Bengal inscriptions: **Varakamandalavisayadhikaranasya**.[11]

Raksamukta seems to be the name of the territory and the seal, under reference, indicates the existence of the office of the Adhikarana of the Visaya of Raksamukta. The seal gives us the name of a new Visaya of Raksamukta. Whether this Visaya was under Tirabhukti or not, we cannot definitely say. Three Visayas of Tirabhukti are known to us from the inscriptions, viz., Kaksa[12], Chamunda[13] and Hodreya[14]. Since Naulagarh is on the north bank of the Ganges (in the older region of Tirabhukti), I am inclined to believe that the Visaya of Raksamukta was also under it. This was possibly one of the chief administrative centres or the headquarters of a district in and around Naulagarh.

Adhikarana indicates a district and so also a Visaya[15], which at times is synonymous with Mandal.[16] Visayadhikaranasya indicates district administrator's office.[17] The seal might have belonged to the chief district officer of the Visaya of Raksamukta. The seal, being the second in the series of stray discoveries from Naulagarh, confirms our previous assumption that it was an important administrative centre for centuries, say, from the Mauryan period onwards. We are not in a position to identify Raksamukta with any of the present villages and until further evidence is forthcoming, it would not be possible to hazard any conjecture in that regard. The identification thus remains a problem and the only conclusion that we can draw is that a Visaya of the name of Raksamukta under the administrative control of an Adhikarana existed in this part of north Bihar under the Guptas. Extensive search in this region is bound to yield good results.

II. A RARE GUPTAN TERRACOTTA SEAL OF SAMUDRAGUPTA FROM NAULAGARH[18]: Since the discovery of the ancient archaeological site of Naulagarh (Begusarai, Bihar) in 1950 by me, a good number of antiquities of immense historical significance, ranging from the Pre-Mauryan to the Pala period, have come to light and the present discovery is one of such finds.

The present discovery is really baffling and enigmatic in the sense that no clear solution could be presented in the present state of our knowledge. It belongs to the Gupta period, especially to the time of the reputed emperor, Samudragupta, beyond any shadow of doubt. This is proved on palaeographic grounds since the letters on the seal, under the reference, along with the legend, are the same as we



find on the coins of Samudragupta. On the standard type, archer type and the battle-axe types of the coins of Samudragupta we have the legend "Samudra" under the arm of the king and the script on those coins surprisingly tallies in all details with what we have here on the seal. In the legend on our seal, we see that each letter has got nail and curves bearing the characteristics of the Guptan script of the time of Emperor Samudragupta and the peculiar similarities of all assumption suggested above. The legend (on seal) is just below the altar on which we see that there is a trident. The trident on the altar with the legend seems to be inexplicable as this is the only seal of its variety discovered so far and hence it has been termed as rare.

In view of the discovery of this rare seal, it may be suggested that the occurrence of the trident on the altar need not deter us from going into the details of the question involved here. The following problem may be posed for consideration:

1. Does this seal belong to Emperor Samudragupta or to some private person?

2. If so, why there is a trident?

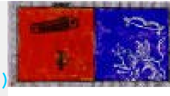
3. Was it stamped at Naulagarh?

4. Was it imported or did it come from other parts of the country to the site of its present discovery?

5. Why there is a double stamp on the same plaque?

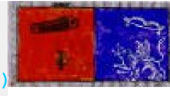
The problems posed above deserve consideration and need to be studied patiently in the light of the discoveries hitherto made. Sealings were not few and far between during the Gupta period and north Bihar alone has yielded a good number of sealings. The Gupta Empire was so well entrenched throughout the length and breadth of Bihar during the time of Samudragupta and even Nepal was a subsidiary state. Hence, the presence of a large number of sealings in different parts of north Bihar is only natural. A critical and scientific study of the Gupta sealings of north Bihar is yet a desideratum. The Basarh seals do throw some light on the fact that Saivite influence was greater in this part of Bihar during the Gupta period and that must have been sufficiently strengthened by the revival of Hinduism during the period under review. North Bihar, as a whole, has been the centre of Saivism since the days of Janaka Videha and it is not unnatural to have a large number of sealings, having Saivite association, from this area.

Siva, with all his attributes, is one of the most important deities of the orthodox triad. Siva is also one of the exponents of various arts and accomplishments and various Sastras including music[19], and if a Saivite seal with the legend of "Sri Samudra" is found, there is no wonder as we learn from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription that Samudragupta was well versed in all the sastras including music. Saiva tradition was very popular in the Gupta period and one of the ministers of Chandragupta II[20] was a Saiva. Even on one silver coins of Kumaragupta I, there is a trident with two ornamental loops below the prong on either side and a photograph of the same has been printed[21] in Altekar's **"Coinage of the Gupta Empire"** (Plate XVII.20). Though the weight of this coin is not recorded, it is evident that the coin belonged to the Gupta emperor, Kumaragupta I.



The seals and coins, having Saiva emblems and insignia, associated with the Kusanas and especially with the later Kusanas, and the symbol of trident on most of them are well-marked. It is a well-known fact that the Gupta rulers borrowed a good deal from the Kusana types of coins and sealings. The trident is also a peculiarity on the Saka-ksatrapa and Bhattaraka coins of western India. We learn from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription that Samudragupta defeated the Naga and Saka-Murunda kings and it is reasonable to suggest that in order to satisfy them he might have adopted the trident symbol in those areas and such other areas as might been the seat of Saivite influence. The acceptance of the principle of local autonomy and internal freedom of the conquered did not make any departure from the accepted imperialist policy of Samudragupta. There was a regular contact between north Bihar and western India as is evident from the Basarh seals and hence the exchange of seals and other materials could not be ruled out in the present state of our historical knowledge. Seals with “Bull” and “Trident” marks have been discovered from Basarh and other sites and possibility of more such seals from Naulagarh cannot be precluded, if scientific excavations are carried out. Of course, it is difficult to make out any sense on the basis of a single find with trident mark.

The double stamping on the seal appears to have been necessitated by the fact that the one was blurred and hence a second one was attempted with success on the same piece. The clay is burnt, and the purpose seems to have made the name of Samudragupta appear more clearly. Though there is no regal title attached to it, it is evident that the seal did not belong to an individual but to the emperor. Whether he imitated the Kusanas or whether he was a Saiva in the beginning cannot be stated with exactitude for the present, nor the fact whether the seal under reference was imported from weatern India, or belonged to the site of Naulagarh. The terracotta seals of the Gupta period have been found from different parts of Bihar and a seal from Sultanganj has recently been edited by me and hence, it is not very unnatural if one has come from Naulagarh. On the basis of the legend, Sri Samudra, it may be surmised with some amount of certainty that it belonged to emperor Samudragupta. The reasons behind the issue of a seal of this type might have been more than one. If we take it to have been imported from western India, the reasons might have been political as in that case, the emperor might have issued such seals to pacify the victims of his western conquest by respecting their religious sentiments without making any radical changes in their local arrangements. If the theory of the Bharasiva-Naga domination of north Bihar be accepted, it may be suggested that since Siva was their most prominent deity, so Samudragupta, after conquering this region, thought it prudent, in a statesman-like manner, to issue seals with trident mark just to pacify their religious sentiments. In view of the discovery of the coin-moulds from the site of Naulagarh, it may be suggested that the coins might have been minted there for local consumption and hence a discovery of the seal of this type should lead us to conclude that it was made at Naulagarh and not imported. The later trident mark on the coin of Kumaragupta was nothing more than an imitation of this seal. The casting of this particular seal at Naulagarh might have been done with politico-religious motive. The trident mark comes within the broader purview of Hinduism if we accept the basic unity of the eternal trinity.



CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL HISTORY OF MITHILA FROM THE FALL OF THE GUPTAS TO THE RISE OF THE KARNATAS, 550 – 1097 AD

GENERAL INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The history of Mithila between 550 and 1097 AD is nothing more than a drama of constant warfares and invasions accompanied with all-round indiscriminate depredations. Mithila was a silent spectator of the most ignonimous scene of retreating forces and advancing armies, all measuring their mighty swords with one another and ultimately falling of one by one. North Bihar was a cock-pit of power politics as subsequent events would show and the upstart political adventurers took their chance for the attainment of political power in this region. Mithila saw the glorious rise and tragic fall of a number of dynasties on her political horizon. After the fall of the Guptas, the later Guptas, the Hunas, Yasodharman, the Maukharis, the Vardhanas, the Varmanas of Assam, the Tibetans, the Chandellas, the Pratiharas, the Palas and the Senas came in quick succession and ravaged and devastated the land. The whole tract of the land of Janaka and Yajnavalkya, the Lichchavis and the Mallas, of the glorious republican tradition, a land trod earlier by Mahavira and Buddha, lay prostrate bleeding for centuries till she was enlivened again on the scene of history by Nanyadeva, the founder of the Karnata dynasty in 1097 AD.

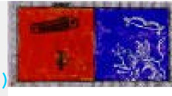
The position of the Gupta Empire in the fourth decade of the sixth century AD was very shaky. Yashodharmana had outraged the territories of north India and had uprooted the Dattas of Bengal. East Bengal was under the successors of Gopachandra. Assam was rising under the Varmanas, the Maukharies were raising their heads in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, while the Pundravardhanabhukti was being ruled by a son of Visnugupta. Pundravardhana was the connecting link between the two sister provinces of north Bihar and north Bengal and had, hence, some strategic importance. Pudravardhanabhukti in the latter half of the sixth century AD extended up to “the Himalayas in the north and might have included Nepal where is situated Varahaksetra which have been identified with Kokamukhaswamitirtha” (IHQ – XXI. 56 ff.). Varahaksetra is situated on the eastern bank of the Kosi and the Triveni rivers in the Himalayas (Cf. JBRS – XXXVII.125-126). Visnugupta had possibly appointed his son to the viceroyalty of Pundravardhanabhukti. Visnugupta was the last flickering light of the Gupta Empire and he possibly fall prey to the cruel sword of an uncontrolled tyrant Yasodharmana, who seems to have cut the string that had so far united the bonds. The Gupta dynasty came to an end in 550 AD though some scholars fix the date at 554 AD. The drama of the decline of the Gupta Empire was fast moving like a cinematograph and it was beyond anybody’s power to cry halt to the then decentralising

tendencies. In 554 AD, the Maukhari king Isanavarmana is said to have overrun Pundravardhana and Sinha takes it to be a victory over the Gaudas (Cf. DKM – 166). Here we have to bear in mind that even prior to this event, Mahabhutavarmana had crossed the Karatoya and conquered a part of eastern Mithila and Moranga and in order to commemorated his conquests made grants of land to the Brahmanas within the conquered area. This area continued to be under Kamarupa till the reign of Susthitavarmana, when in the latter half of the sixth century AD, it was conquered by Mahasengupta who attempted to re-assert Gupta supremacy (HAIB – 124; JIH – XXXII.130; for details, see Infra).

LATER GUPTAS AND MITHILA

Nothing definite is known as to the history of north Bihar after the exit of Yasodharmana. We have seen that Visnugupta continued to hold Magadha and Pundravardhanabhukti.[1] There were various feudatories of Visnugupta and notably among them were Jivitagupta I and Isanavarmana, who possibly helped Visnugupta in his campaign. Visnugupta's rule came to an end in 551 AD. Isanavarmana had won great renown in northern India and had overrun Pudravardhana in 554 AD and the Gupta feudatories had attained royal status in the east. One of them, Mahasenagupta, concluded a matrimonial alliance with the house of Thaneswara as a protection against the Maukharis. This alliance placed Mahasenagupta in a very advantageous position. He marched against Susthitavarmana of Kamarupa and defeated him.[2] In doing all these, his main aim was to reassert Gupta supremacy in these regions. R D Banerjee holds that Mithila was included in the kingdom of Mahasenagupta.[3] Whatever be the actual state of affairs, it is clear that about this time Susthitavarmana came into conflict with Mahasenagupta and was defeated. All were not well with the history of Magadha and every power in contemporary India tried to fish in the troubled water. The Mahakuta Inscription informs us that in the sixth century AD Kirtivarmana I of the Chalukya dynasty[4] had extended his power and achieved victory over the kings of Anga, Vanga and Magadha. Mahasenagupta seems to have been driven out of Magadha and was replaced by the Maukharis. While epigraphic records of the later Guptas have been discovered from north Bihar, no Maukhari documents have so far been discovered from this area. It was with Susthitavarmana of Nidhanpur copper plate with whom Mahasenagupta came into conflict and the former was defeated by the latter.

It is generally believed that the later Guptas held sway over Uttarapatha. Till the recent discovery of a copper plate of the later Guptas in the heart of Tirhut, there was no solid or epigraphic or numismatic evidence to show their authority in this part. The writer of these lines had in one of his earlier papers pointed out that the later Guptas had established "their sway in Bihar minus Mithila".[5] Now on the basis of new evidences it seems that the decline of the Gupta Empire in Magadha was followed by the establishment of a line of the later Guptas and they held sway over north Bihar. Mahasenagupta's conquest was consolidated and necessary arrangements were made for the administration of this region which was then well-known as Tirabhukti. Vamana's **Linganusasana**[6] of the eighth century AD mentions north Bihar as Tirabhukti. The later Guptas possibly made Tirabhukti their headquarters at a time when the Maukharis were consolidating themselves in Magadha. The conquest of Pundravardhana by the Maukhari in 554 AD, might suggest their temporary but nominal authorities in north Bihar and it is no use guessing that 'it may have touched the terai district' or 'the whole of Bihar, including Magadha and Tirhut regions, was under the direct control of Maukharis, over which the Guptas acted only as



chieftains or rulers under their Maukhari over-lords.'[7] The later Guptas were originally connected with the states of Bihar and all their inscriptions have been found in Bihar. They excercised their sovereignty in Pundravardhana and attempted to extend their dominions beyond the sea. A distinctive change in the administrative policy relating to Pudravardhana is discernible when we see that Buddhagupta managed it through his responsible officers. The services of the **Dattas** were dispensed with and the government of the province was conducted by emperor's own son.

THE MAUKHARIS

The Maukharis under Isanavarmana, after the death of Visnugupta, claimed right to succeed to the legacy of the Imperial Guptas. Blood is thicker than water and this blood relationship of the later Guptas with the Imperial Guptas was a factor to be reckoned with even at such a late period. Kumaragupta and Isanavarmana seem to have been at daggers drawn and one was the impediment in the way of the other. Scholars are divided over the actual nature of conflict between the two. R K Mukherji and N R Ray believe that Kumaragupta was defeated in the contest.[8] There is no evidence to show that the Maukharis had any victory over Kumaragupta, rather the later won victory over Isanavarmana. Tribute paid to Isanavarmana in the Aphsad Inscription, suggests that "before this contest with Kumaragupta, Isanavarmana had won great renown."[9] From the time of Kumaragupta onwards, the later Guptas assumed independence. Kumaragupta was succeeded by Damodargupta and the latter by Mahasenagupta. At this time the other imperial Gupta Empire in eastern India including Tirhut and Pundravardhana was still under the direct administration of the Imperial Gupta Emperors. The Gunaighar copper plate inscription, written by Sandhivigrahikarin karan kayastha Naradatta, is important evidence in this respect.[10]

MAHASENAGUPTA

He cemented an alliance with the Vardhanas of Thaneswara with a view to protect his own western frontier against the Maukharis who were his life-long enemies and who were also aspiring for imperial expansion in north India. The growing Varmana power of Kamarupa was an impediment in the way of his expansion and therefore he proceeded to measure swords with him. The victory of Susthitavarmana of Kamarupa must have been a remarkable event as we find that even in the Aphsad Inscription it is mentioned with glory.[11] What, after all, was the motive of Mahasenagupta of going to the easternmost limit of India to measure sword with Susthitavarmana of Kamarupa, when the family enemy, the Maukharis, were knocking at the door of Magadha and the tinkling sound of their swords was disturbing the peace of his ears? It is a famous dictum that one cannot repair one's house in a hurricane. The Maukharis were like hurricane when he had adjusted his position in the west by the Gupta-Vardhana alliance.

Barua holds that with the dissolution of the Gupta Empire after Yasodharmana's lightening victory, the Varmana rulers of Kamarupa extended their authority westward and reached the Kosi river in the Purnea district, where Mahabhutavarmana made grants of land in Chandrapuri **visaya** bounded by the dried Kausiki.[12] Why the grant was made to such a large number of Brahmanas? The Brahmanas were possibly annoyed at the Buddhist supremacy over Mithila and so they migrated to Purnea and its

surroundings. The **Sampradayikas** designate themselves as Maithilas and they still follow the **smriti** rule of Mithila school.[13] It appears that Mahabhutavarmana held sway over a part of north Bihar. Some scholars hold that the lands donated in the Nidhanpur grant lay in Sylhet district.[14] In this connection, the most important point to be noted is that the only Kausiki west of Trisrota is the river Kosi of north Bihar. P N Bhattacharya placed the area somewhere near Karnasuvarna in Bengal.[15] These difficulties need not stand in our way as we know that as late as in the days of Akbar, Purnea was included in Suba Bengal.[16] It should also be remembered that Nidhanpur plates have not yet been found in their complete form. The grant was renewed by Bhaskarvarmana from Karna-suvarna. Lines 126, 128-132 give the topography of the grant. The **Mayurasalmalagraharas** containing the assignments formed out of the silts of the Kausiki and Ganginik, was comprised in the Chandrapuri **visaya** (Lines 49-51). The area was bounded on the east by the suska Kausiki, on the west by the Ganginik: on the south-east and the north-west the suska Kausiki was represented respectively by the **dumbari-chcheda** and a tank of vyavaharika khasoka. On the south it was marked by **dumbari-chcheda** again and the same sign represented the Ganginik on the south-west. These are the internal data on which we can base our findings. The identification of suska-kausika with the **Mara-Kusiyara** of **Pancha-khanda** in Sylhet cannot be accepted.[17] Other identifications are also not convincing. The mention of **Jatali** on the north is important. **Jatali** means forest. Forest even today is a speciality of the district of Purnea, the earliest boundary line of Kausiki. Kausiki of the Nidhanpur plates should be identified with Kosi.[18] The Vappaghosavata grant uses Ganginik, issued from Karnasuvarna, and refers to Audumbarika **visaya**. **Udumbaradumbari** have the same meaning (i.e., figures). Chandrapuri **visaya** touched the borders of the ancient Udumbara district in these sides.[19] According to the **Brhat-smhita**[20], Chandrapuri lay in the east. Since there is no mention of any **bhukti** in the Nidhanpur grant, the mere mention of **visaya** does not admit of any verification. If Barua's suggestion be accepted, it would appear that the Varmanas of Kamarupa extended their authority up to Purnea following the dissolution of the central Gupta authority.

The Maukharis were already there while the Varmanas were expanding and that is why, it seems, Mahasenagupta proceeded to the east, destroyed Kamarupa's authority in north Bihar and Bengal, and successfully pursued the Varmanas up to the Lauhitya. Lauhitya, which provided the boundary between the later Guptas and Kamarupa, "still sang the mighty fame" of Mahasenagupta.[21] According to R D Banerji, Magadha, Assam, Vanga, Varendra and Mithila were included in the kingdom of Mahasenagupta.[22] Mahasenagupta's victory seems to have been transitory. In Magadha he was the rival of Kirtivarmana.[23] The Maukharis had also penetrated into Magadha.[24] Jayanaga of the Vappaghosavata grant was possibly the king of the Gauda and probably annexed Udumbara **visaya**[25] of Purnea district. Being pressed on all sides, Mahasenagupta possibly retired to Malwa in 582 AD.[26] The later Guptas were replaced in Magadha by the Maukharis near about 595 AD.

MITHILA DURING THE PERIOD OF STRUGGLE BETWEEN GAUDA-KAMARUPA-KANNAUJ

Susthitavarmana's defeat at the hands of Mahasenagupta was repaired to by Supratistitavarmana though the latter too had to feel the weight of the Gauda arm. He was succeeded by Bhaskaravarmana who got alarmed at the success of his neighbour Sasanka. The contemporary political situation enabled Bhaskaravarmana to seek an alliance with Harsa against the common enemy Sasanka. On the basis of

Nidhanpur grant, Barua holds that the alliance between Harsa and Bhaskaravarmana was disastrous for Sasanka. Bhaskaravarmana attacked from the east and Harsa from the west and defeated Sasanka.[27] But on an examination of all important facts and events, it is proved beyond doubt that Barua's findings are not correct. The **AMMK** gives an account of the struggle between Sasanka and Harsa and on the basis of that source Jayaswal has suggested that the battle of Pundravardhana took place between the two.[28] Sasanka could not be completely crushed. In view of the rise of Varmanas in Assam, Sasanka consolidated his position in Pundravardhana. In the present state of our knowledge, it is better to agree with Sinha that "Sasanka had to eschew his ambition to become the master of whole of north India.... and had to be content with his own kingdom of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa."[29] He came to the throne in the early years of the seventh century AD and his rule came to an end in about 625 AD. He was followed by Purnavarmana in Magadha, who preceded **Harsa**.

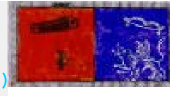
SASANKA AND MITHILA

The rise of the Gauda in Bengal possibly coincided with the rise of Maukharis and the Chalukya offensive against Mahasenagupta.[30] Sasanka originally began his career as a Mahasamanta under Mahasenagupta[31] or was possibly the Mahasamanta of Magadha under Jayanaga.[32] The regular conflict of power between the Maukharis, the later Guptas and the Gaudas had turned Magadha into a cock-pit of international dispute with the result that the centre of political gravity now shifted to Kannauj where the Vardhanas made a bid for supremacy in north India. Sasanka conquered a considerable portion of north and south Bihar. Both Bana and Hiuen-tsang suggest that Sasanka was powerful ruler. His kingdom included Karnasuvarna, Magadha and the intervening kingdom or tracts of Tirabhukti and Kasi.[33] The tradition about Tirhut being a part of five-divisioned Gauda world may not be a mere fiction.

Sasanka's authority extended practically over the whole of Bihar. On the basis of the **AMMK**, S C Sarkar has suggested, "Then Soma (Sasanka), an unparalleled hero, will become king up to the banks of the Ganges (Gangatira or Tirabhukti) and thereafter even in Varanasi.... There will be dissensions in Magadha monarchy in the east at the time of the rise of Soma. At that time, on the bank of the Ganges (Tirabhukti) and at Varanasi, there will be king 'PRA' of the ksatriya recognised by the Sudra king (Huna) at Nandanagar on the Ganges. He ruled for 55 (or 77) years. He ruled up to the sea in the east, controlled the barbarian brigands sheltered in the Vindhya valleys at his frontier, he was rival-less in Magadha, from Avanti to Prachi-samudra, beyond the Lauhitya up to the Himavat to the north" (**JBORS** – XXVII, pp. 236-237). Jayaswal identifies this Sudra king with Huna Toraman (**IHI** – 64). The Hunas are said to have occupied the banks of the Ganges up to the east. **PRA** of the **AMMK** has been identified with Prakataditya by Jayaswal. He was possibly a subordinate ruler under Yasodharmana. According to the Tibetans the Prachi included the whole country from Tirahuti (Champaran) to Kalinga (**IC** – VII. No. 2). It appears from a study of the different sources that Sasanka ruled over a vast area including north Bihar.

EXTENSION OF KAMARUPA'S INFLUENCE OVER EASTERN PART OF TIRHUT

We have discussed above the data supplied by the Nidhanpur grant in connection with the later Guptas. It appears that Bhaskaravarmana re-issued the grant from Karnasuvarna. The territories mentioned in

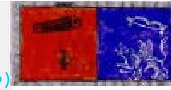
the grant must have been re-conquered and acquired before such grants were made.[34] After Sasanka's death, north and west Bengal was conquered by Bhaskaravarmana. The turmoil following the death of Harsa might have enabled Bhaskaravarmana to conquer Bengal and pitch his victorious camp at Karnasuvarna. He is referred to as the king of eastern India in the Chinese annals[35] in connection with the expedition of Wang Hiuen-Tse.[36] His occupation of Tirahut is confirmed by the fact that from here he could actively assist the Chinese envoy who had taken refuge in Nepal just to the north of Mithila.[37] Kosi formed the boundary between Kamarupa and Mithila and the land donated by the charter lay in eastern Mithila. We learn from same source that the produce of the land was increased by the Kausiki.

Bhaskaravarmana, being the master of central Bengal after Harsa, helped the victorious Tibetan army with men and material. Some scholars think that he made himself the master of Pundravardhana.[38] This could have been forced on him by his control over northern Bengal whose boundaries touched the Himalayas in the north and Tirhut in the west, both of which had for the time being, come under the sway of Tibetan imperialism.[39] Lands granted to the Brahmanas earlier were restored to them by Bhaskaravarmana. The produce, that was to be increased by the Kosi, was to go to Brahmanas. Kosi proceeds from the Himalaya in the north and runs southward to meet the Ganges. D R Bhandarkar observed, "The western boundary of the kingdom of Bhutivarmana, who originally granted lands in the Nidhanpur inscriptions, could hardly have extended up to Purnea district, because in the time of Bhutivarmana, the imperial Guptas were the masters of northern part of Bengal which intervenes between Purnea and Kamarupa."[40] Here we have to bear in mnd that even without going to Pundravardhana, Kamarupa could conquer eastern Mithila. Purnea was the north-western boundary of Kamarupa while Pundravardhana lay to the south of Kamarupa. Purnea and Kamarupa are co-terminus and the river Karatoya is even now a boundary between Purnea and Jalpaiguri. The Gupta power was on decline during the sixth century. In 554, Maukhari Isanavarmana had over-run Pundravardhana. Barua had rightly suggested that Mahabhutavarmana crossed the Karatoya and conquered a part of eastern Mithila and Morang and to commemorate his conquests made the grant of lands to the Brahmanas of Mithila, within the conquered territory. The areas remained under Kamarupa till the time of Susthitavarmana, when Mahasenagupta invaded Kamarupa and re-acquired this area. Sasanka was defeated by Bhaskaravarmana and after the victory he pitched his camp at Karnasuvarna and renewed the grant.[41]

The earliest Brahmana settlers of Assam were the Vaidika Sampradayikas who had migrated from Mithila. In preference to Bengal school they followed the Mithila school of **smriti** law. The grant, it seems, was made in favour of the Maithila Brahmanas, a section of which was known as Nagara Brahmanas.[42] The descendents of the grantee migrated to Sylhet. They still follow the smriti of Vacaspati Misra.

HARSAVARDHANA

Under Harsa, Mithila gained importance as a border province with Nepal, Tibet and China on the north and Kamarupa on the east. There is no doubt that Tirabhukti came under orbit of Harsa's Empire. All places mentioned in connection with his tours of inspection lie eastward and moreover Hiuen-tsang calls Harsa "lord of five Indies", that is, the Punjab, Kanyakubja, Mithila, Gauda and Utkal.[43] It was possibly



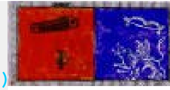
after the fall of Sasanka that Harsa conquered Gauda, Pundravardhana and Mithila. He became the king of Magadha in 641 AD. In Bihar, his kingdom included Hiranyaparvat (Munger), Champa (Bhagalpur), Kajangal (Rajmahal)[44] and Tirhut. He brought about the unity of north India and put the outlying provinces of his empire under the able governors. Tirhut was called Tieh-lo[45] by the Chinese. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen-tsang, visited Tirhut in 635 AD and found Buddhism waning in that region. He is silent about the nature of the government at Vaisali (Fei-she-li). The chief city of the Vrjji country (Fu-li-chih) was called **Chan-su-na**. It was in a ruinous state. It was just like a country town with a population of over three thoysand families.[46] The name of the ruler is not mentioned, evidently because it was under the imperial domination of Harsa. At Vaisali proper the Buddhist establishment were dilapidated and deserted and the Buddhists were only few and far between. Various sects lived pell-mell.[47] In the Vrjji country the Buddhists were numerous.[48] Harsa made necessary arrangements for the administration of the conquered territories. The governors were known as Samantas and Mahasamantas and they wielded considerable powers. Tirabhukti was one of the important centres of administration under Harsa. During the lifetime of Harsa, Arjuna or Arunaswa was the governor of Tirhut with sufficient powers. This is evident from the Chinese sources. After Harsa's death in 646-47 AD, he revolted and assumed independence. Hiuen-tsang is also said to have visited Mithila.

TIBETAN INVASION OF TIRHUT

(A critical evaluation of the sources relating to this episode)

The death of Harsa was followed by an upheaval of an unprecedented scale. Arjuna or Arunaswa was the governor of Tirhut. The circumstances following the death of Harsa, the usurpation of the throne of Kannauj by Arjuna and his subsequent defeat and capture by the Chinese ambassador helped the extension of the Tibetan influence into the Gangetic valley and north Bihar. A Chinese mission under Wang-Hiuen-Tse arrived in India immediately after the death of Harsa. According to the story preserved in the Chinese annals, Arjuna attacked the mission. Wang fled to Nepal, secured some soldiers and disastrously defeated and imprisoned Arjuna and took him a captive to China. Wang also secured help from Tibet and Bhaskaravarmana of Assam. The chaotic political condition accounted for the ascendancy of the Tibetan authority in north Bihar. It indicates a general anarchy and confusion in north Bihar and the neighbouring region after the death of Harsa. The episode took place in 647-648 AD probably to the north of the Ganges and not far from the Gandaka. It can be suggested that the scene of action was laid in Nepal border of north Bihar. The mission, making the allied state of Nepal their base, invaded India to avenge the insult done to the Chinese representative who came to Harsa's court after his death. The mission defeated the faithless minister Arjuna and in this effort the mission was aided by Bhaskaravarmana with the supplies of cattle, horses and accoutrements.[49]

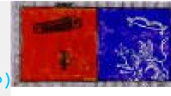
The sources regarding the episode are conflicting and hence in arriving at a particular conclusion we have to examine them afresh. The leader of the mission, Wang, visited India four times and has himself left an account of his travel in India.[50] Only extracts from this account are preserved in **Fa-iuen-dhu-lin**, compiled by Tao-chen[51] in 662 AD. There is no mention of his second embassy to Magadha in these accounts. There is a reference to his second embassy to Magadha in the **History of the Tang Dynasty**, of which we have two versions (897-946 and 1060 AD) and these have been translated by Levi.[52] The



account of Ma-twa-lin[53], Pien-i-Tien and that in the **Che-fu-yuan-koei**[54] (1013 AD) are based on the two later Tang histories. In the old history of the Tang dynasty it is said that “Siladitya had just died and there was anrchy in the country. His minister Nafuti/**Olonashuen** usurped throne and sent the barbarian forces to drive out Hiuen-Tse. The mission has only thirty horsemen as escort. Hiuen-tse alone escaped. He fled to Tufan (Tibet) and brought 1200 picked soldiers along with 7000 Nepalese cavalry. He was accompanied by Tsiang-Chen-Jenn, second officer of the embassy. The battle that was fought lasted for three days. Arjuna was made captive and brought to China.”[55] According to Ma-twa-lin, he stormed the capital of Arjuna, Ta-po-na-la (Chapra or Champaran). According to the second history of the Tang dynasty, Wang got 1000 soldiers from Tibet and 7000 cavalry from Nepal. He divided his army into several coups and advanced as far as the town of **Cha-puo-ho-lo**. He captured it on the third day. Arjuna fled but he reassembled his troops and again offered battle. Arjuna was captured. Even after his arrest, his followers opposed the passage of the river **Kien-to-wei** and a great battle ensued. **Chen-iuen** had 580 walled towns. Kumara (Bhaskarvarmana) also helped him with men and material. Arjuna was presented to the Emperor. The captive Indian king remained in China till his death. Ma-twan-lin supports the version of the new history of the Tang dynasty.

All these accounts when read together indicate that the usurping minister was a local ruler of Tirhut and that all the campaigns of Wang were confined to this region. Bagchi calls Arjuna a king of Tirabhukti.[56] If we accept this statement it would mean that Arjuna had usurped the throne and Wang had to go to Kannauj. The inscription, engraved on the statue of the royal prisoner, means – “Hindu king of the kingdom of Tirabhukti, Arjuna or Arunaswa.” The river **Chao-nuo** is identified with Ganga and **Kien-to-wei** and **Chen-lien** with Gandaki. Waddel suggested that the capital city of the same as that of the Vrjjis.[57] Why should Tibet come to the aid of a foreign mission is a very pertinent question? There was nothing definite for which the Tibetan monarch should come to the rescue of a foreigner and his mission which had gone to India from China. The Tibetan king, Srong-btsen-Sgampo (600-650 AD) was an ambitious ruler and his imperialist intentions were an open secret. He married the daughters of the king of China and king of Ansuvarmana of Nepal.[58] Nepal was subject to Tibet in 643 AD.[59] It was in the reign of Jisnugupta of Nepal that Nepal and Tibet helped the Chinese envoy against Arjuna[60] between 647 and 650 AD. It seems there was some sort of understanding on this score between Nepal and Tibet. The anarchy and confusion created by the death of Harsa emboldened Srong to make a bid for supremacy in the valley and the plains of north Bihar.

Wang is said to have fought with the barabarians and when he appealed to Tibet for help, Tibetan king took it as god-sent opportunity and hence without allowing any grass to grow under his feet, Srong came forward to fish in the troubled waters of North Bihar. Mazumdar thinks that Srong was already in India and Wang’s campaign should be regarded merely as a part of Indian campaign of the Tibetan king.[61] The campaign was limited to a narrow region along the foothills of the Himalayas and extending to the plains of north Bihar, of which Arjuna was formerly a governor and later an independent ruler after Harsa’s demise. Mazumdar further believes that the Tibetan king left no impress and returned home without any permanent gain.[62] His military success in north Bihar was of a temporary nature. The only Tibetan source, **La-dyago-rgyal-rabs**, gives an account of Srong’s conquest but it is very strange that there is no mention of his Indian expedition or even intervention in Indian affairs.[63] What Levi means to



say is simply the fact that the minister of Srong entered "into some diplomatic relationship with Hindustan."[64] Petech has shown that the Tibetan king, Ki-nu-shi-Lung died a little after 702 AD during a campaign against Nepal and the peoples of Indian frontier that had rebelled against him.

In the light of the particular solitary Tibetan source, it is difficult to agree with Mazumdar that his campaign and resounding victories should be viewed as a part of the general Tibetan campaign. Ma-twa-Lin's evidence is not corroborated by any Tibetan source. Even in the Nepalese records there is no mention of this episode. It is true that Arjuna, the ruler of eastern India, tried to maintain his separate existence as soon as the iron hand of Harsa was withdrawn. Whether he fought against Tibet or Nepal is not exactly clear from the conflicting sources. Levi has hinted at some sort of diplomatic relationship. The Tibetan expedition did not affect the general course of Indian history, though it might have disturbed negligible portion of north Bihar for few years.

While Smith regards this event as one of immense significance[65], Mazumdar does not attach much credence to this event.[66] The fact that the mission of a Buddhist country rapaciously massacred the population of Tirhut, reflects little credit on the Buddhists.[67] Thakur has suggested that the Brahman governor Arjuna "insulted the Chinese mission probably because of his hatred towards them."[68] In the face of the evidences, cited earlier, it is impossible to disbelieve the story altogether as a romance. An iota of truth is there though there have been unnecessary exaggerations. The event was localised by the then forces of circumstances. Just after the death of Harsa, the later Guptas under Madhavagupta asserted their independence, the Maukharis raised their heads and following their footsteps Arjuna also did the same in his own region but unfortunately he could not succeed on account of the Tibetan invasion in the wake of Wang's mission. Madhavagupta might have successfully resisted the usurper Arjuna, who is reported to have "forced neighbouring kings into submission."[69] He resisted the pretensions of Arjuna. Arjuna might have foreseen that the successful arrival of the mission would raise the prestige and that is why he possibly attacked with a view to destroy it. His miscalculations regarding mission's helplessness brought Tirhut under the heels of Tibetan imperialism. The Chinese annals have possibly exaggerated this conquest of Tirabhukti as conquest of central India by the Tibetan army.[70]

The Maukharis and the later Guptas felt the need of being cautious against the new danger. The alliance between the Maukharis of Kannauj, the later Guptas of Magadha and the Lichchavis of Nepal was possibly directed against the rising power of Tibet and that prevented the expansion of the hill state into the interior of India.[71] E H Parker believes that the Tibetan authority continued in Tirhut till 703 AD, when both Nepal and Tirhut threw off the Tibetan yoke, and the king of Tibet perished during his personal conduct of the punitive expedition that he had organised against them. Levi places the event in 702 AD. According to Levi, this event began with this new phase in the history of Mithila which was marked by the re-establishment of the later Guptas in Magadha.[72] From the Chinese and Tibetan records, it appears that Nepal and Indian provinces of Tibetan Empire revolted. It is quite possible that Tirabhukti which may have formed a part of the Tibetan Empire, may have been annexed to the Empire of Magadha in the time of Visnugupta and Jivitagupta II.[73] This was the first and the last unfortunate incident in the long history of friendly relations between India and China. The Tibetan king had vindicated the honour of the Chinese emperor and his mission. Bhaskaravarmana had helped the mission to avoid attack on his own territory as he was then busy in consolidating his new gains. Thus the

conclusion boils down to the fact that Tirabhukti was stormed and like Nepal, Tibet claimed north Bihar as vassal.[74] The Tibetan rule was short-lived. The conflict was confined to a very limited area in north Bihar and it did not even touch the fringe of any other part. Further researches in the Chinese and Tibetan annals may bring to light more facts. Unless further evidence is forthcoming, we can tentatively suggest that a portion of Tirhut remained under the occupation of Tibet for about fifty years.

THE RESTORED LATER GUPTAS (647-725)

Madhavagupta, son of Mahasenagupta, reasserted his authority in Magadha after the death of Harsa and successfully resisted the claims of Arjuna. He kept himself aloof from the contemporary upheavals in north Bihar and saved Magadha from the Tibetan inroads. North Bihar and Nepal were under the heels of Tibetan imperialism. Madhavagupta was succeeded by Adityasena who aspired to continue the spiritual heritage of the earlier Guptas. He was a powerful ruler and annexed the whole of south Bihar wherefrom his inscriptions have been found out. The Nepal inscription of the time of Jayadeva mentions Adityasena as a great king of Magadha. It is difficult to say if Adityasena ruled over north Bihar, which was then under the Tibetan occupation. His authority over Anga might have brought under his sway some riverine tracts on the north bank of the Ganges of north Bihar. He was succeeded by Devagupta and the latter by Visnugupta (695-715). It was possibly during his reign that Tirhut and Nepal threw off the Tibetan yoke. From the Mangraon plate inscription, it appears that he was in possession of entire Bihar. He was succeeded by his son Jivitagupta II. It was asserted by me once that “unless further evidence is forthcoming we cannot say anything about their (later Guptas) hold in Mithila.”[75] The recent discovery of a later Gupta copper plate in the Katra police station of the Muzaffarpur district proves beyond doubt the existence of their authority in north Bihar. It may be suggested in this connection that after the defeat of the Tibetans, and possibly by the advance of the later Guptas in this region, they established themselves in this area at a time when they were pressed hard by the Chalukya invasion[76] referred to earlier. They seem to have continued their power till it was usurped by Arjuna and ultimately annexed by Tibetans. We have no evidence to show that north Bihar formed a part of the kingdom of Madhavagupta. The fact that Adityasena did not assume imperial titles till the closing years of his reign may be because of his respect for the powerful Tibetan empire.[77] After the exit of the Tibetans, the later Guptas seem to have re-annexed the area possibly under Visnugupta or under Jivitagupta II. Jivitagupta II is the last known ruler of the later Gupta dynasty. He seems to have been defeated by Yasovarmana of Kannauj. Tirabhukti might have formed a part of the kingdom of Magadha during the time of Jivitagupta II. The newly discovered copper plate throws sufficient light on the administrative system of Mithila. It refers to Tirabhukti and also the Visaya.[78] The old administrative system of the imperial Guptas in north Bihar seems to have been revived by the later Guptas.

YASOVARMANA AND MITHILA

Vakpatiraja’s **Gaudavaho** and Kalhana’s **Rajatarangini** throw some light on the meteoric career of Yasovarmana who appeared in Kannauj in between 725 and 733 AD. The **Gaudavaho** preserves an account of his **digvijaya** and discusses the slaying of the Gauda king (P. XLVIII). It refers to the defeat of the **Magadhanatha** (king of Magadha). The defeat of **Magadhanatha** must have necessarily indicated the disintegration of later Gupta’s authority (vv.695-697). The whole of Magadha and Gauda fell into his

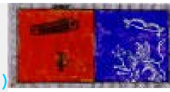
hand. Gauda included the parts of Pundra, areas in about the modern districts of Malda, Rajashahi and Purnea. A Banerji suggests that the decline of the Tibetan authority[79] probably coincided with the rise of Yasovarmana and his Himalayan expedition had something to do with this event. If any credence be attached to his "subjugation of the Himalayan country", it can be said that he brought under his control all the territories between Magadha and the Himalayas. Under the circumstances we are driven to the conclusion that he also conquered Tirabhukti. The Nalanda stone inscription confirms his victorious campaign.[80] There is no doubt that he brought to an inglorious end to the extensive empire of the later Guptas.[81]

EXPANSION OF THE INFLUENCE OF KASHMIR IN THE HIMALAYAN REGION AND NEPAL

Yasovarmana was humbled by Lalitaditya Muktapida. He invaded eastern India and that was followed by Jayapida's. He came up to Pundravardhana and married Kalyanadevi, the daughter of its king named Jayanta. The identity of Jayanta is problematical.[82] He helped Jayanta in bringing Five Gaudas under subjection and if that be the fact, we cannot exclude north Bihar out of the range. The Ragholi plates of Jayavardhana II refer to the conquest of Pundra by a prince of the Saila dynasty. Pundra is decidedly Purnea or a major portion of it.[83] H C Rai identifies this Saila ruler with the **Magadhanatha** defeated by Yasovarmana.[84] It has been questioned by Sinha who holds that **Magadhanatha** was Jivitagupta II.[85] Sailas came into power possibly after the defeat of Yasovarmana, during whose time Harsadeva, father-in-law of Jayadeva, the Nepal king, was the ruler of Gauda. The king of five Gaudas reduced by Jayapida may have belonged to the Saila dynasty.[86] In face of all these facts, Thakur's findings are cmpletely misleading.[87] He identifies the Vanga king with Gopala. From the Pasupati temple inscription of Jayadeva II of Nepal (748 AD), it appears that Harsadeva of Kamrup undertook an expedition into Bengal and Bihar.[88] He is said to have belonged to the royal Bhagadatta line.[89] This Harsadeva may have ruled in the western portion of eastern India.[90] In view of the conflicting nature of the sources it is difficult to state the nature of Kashmir's influence in north Bihar.

MITHILA BETWEEN 725 AND 770 (FROM THE FALL OF YASOVARMANA TO THE RISE OF THE PALAS)

In the absence of all historical evidence and records for the period under review, we have to depend solely on the solitary account of Lama Taranatha's "**History of Buddhism in India**" in the year 1608 AD. Taranatha holds that Chandra dynasty ruled in Bengal and north Bihar before the rise of the Palas, though no other definite data about their rule is known to us. The names of all the kings prior to Gopala end in "chandra"; for example, Vrksachandra, Vigamachandra, Kamachandra (who was possibly a contemporary of Harsavardhana; Cf. **MB**-182), Simhachandra, Balachandra (being driven from Bengal, presumably by the powerful king Panchamsimha of the Lichchavi family whose kingdom extended from Tibet to Tilinga and Benaras to the sea, ruled in Tirhut).[91] It is said that prince Balachandra of Bengal, son of king Simhachandra of Bengal and east Magadha, was banished by his father to Tirahuti. He was a devout Buddhist and became a conqueror in all four quarters.[92] Balachandra established his rule in Tirhut and extended his authority up to Kamrup.[93] His son Vimalachandra retrieved the fortunes of his family and ruled over the kings of Bengal, Kamrup, Magadha and Tirhut.[94] He patronised the Buddhist sage Ratnakirti and his teacher was Acharya Amarasuddhi. He married the sister of king Bhartrihari of



Malwa. He was succeeded by his son Govindachandra. He was ruling when the Buddhist teacher Dharmakirti[95] died. He may thus be placed in the last quarter of the sixth century or the first quarter of the seventh century AD. He renounced the secular life under the influence of Jalandharipa and Kanhapa. He was called **Dinamukta**.

He and his son Lalitachandra were both converted to Tantrika Buddhism by Kanhapa. Both of them attained **Siddhi**. Lalitachandra succeeded his father. It was in Lalitachandra's time that there flourished eminent Buddhist sages, Santisoma, Subhamitra and Silaraksita. Though he was the last king of the dynasty he is said to have ruled for many years.[96] The rule of the Chandras was followed by a period of anarchy in Bengal, Kamrup, Orissa, Varendra and Tirabhukti though it has been suggested by the Lama that Bengal ruled Tirhut and Kamrup.[97]

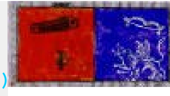
MITHILA BETWEEN 770 AND 1097

A. THE PALAS, EXTENT OF PALA RULE IN MITHILA

The anarchical condition of north eastern India facilitated the rise of the Palas. That anarchy was the order of the day is evident from the account of Lama Taranatha and the Khalimpur copper plate of Dharmapala. Kielhorn while interpreting the word "**Matsanyaya**" thinks that "Gopala was made king by the people to put an end to a lawless state of things in which everyone was prey of his neighbours."[98] According to the Tibetan historian, Gopala was born of a Ksatriya woman and a tree god near Pundravardhana.[99] The founder of the Pala dynasty was a product of circumstances and he stabilised the position of his dynasty in Bengal and Bihar. In north India the Palas established the strongest empire after the Guptas. It is believed that Gopala exercised some influence over Tirhut.[100] The Munger copper plate of Devapala describes Gopala as "Lord of the Earth" and "crest jewel of the heads of monarchs". He possibly brought a major portion of Bihar under his control. He was succeeded by Dharmapala.

Dharmapala was the founder of the greatness of this line and was a leading figure in the contemporary politics of India.[101] He is referred to an **Uttarapathaswami** by a Gujarati poet Soddhala in his **Udayasundarikatha**.[102] The expression **Panchagauda** is most probably reminiscent of the Gauda empire of Dharmapala. The beginning of this trend may be traced to the time of Sasanka with its culmination attained during the Pala period. It was in this sense that Kalhana probably used this expression. Till the time of the Palas and the Senas, Mithila was regarded as the fifth division of Bengal. The boundaries of Mithila, Bengal and Kamrup were not clearly defined and it was generally believed that the country west of Mahananda was regarded as the country of Mithila. Kosi and Mahananda joined the river Karatoya and they formed the ethnic boundary line. Gauda lay to the north-east of Mithila.[103]

On the basis of all the available sources, it may be asserted that the Palas held sway over Mithila since the establishment of their rule. While Gopala is said to have extended his authority up to the sea, Dharmapala extended his sway to the west of Bengal. The tripartite struggle was a most important factor in the political history of early medieval India and the keynote of this struggle was the possession of the Ganges and Yamuna. Munger in north Bihar was the deciding centre of this struggle. According to Taranatha, Dharmapala subjugated Kamrup, Tirhut, Gauda and other countries.[104] His achievements are also clear from the Khalimpur **CP**.[105] His occupation of Tirhut is further supported by other evidences.

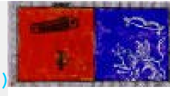


From the **Swayambhupurana**, we learn that he occupied the throne of Bengal and the Munger **CP** refers to his campaign at the foot of the Himalayas.[106] It seems that he acquired supremacy over Nepal after conquering Mithila.[107] The withdrawal of Govinda III Rastrakuta from north Indian politics facilitated the path of the Gurjara-Pratihara Nagabhatta II who is said to have defeated Dharmapala at the battle of Munger.[108] Munger district in those days included a portion of the river tract of Tirhut and the Krimila Visaya of Srinagarabhukti extended up to Naulagarh on the left bank of the Ganges.[109] It appears that the encounter "between the two contending forces must have taken place in or near about the plains of Tirhut itself. ....Tirhut must also have formed one of the main war theatres of this tripartite struggle."[110] What seems to be more plausible is that Tirhut possibly formed the rear-guard of Dharmapala's campaign against Nagabhatta and keeping his base in Tirhut he fought at Munger with Ganges as the dividing line. He, thereby, seems to have saved his authority in a major portion of Bihar and after Nagabhatta's retirement he retrieved his position again, as is evident from the Khalimpur record, Kesava **prasasti**, and the Bhagalpur grant. The conquest of Mithila appears to be a reality if we take into consideration the following facts. His army is said to have visited Kedara and Gokarna. The latter is identified with a sacred place in Nepal on the Bagmati.[111] The capital of Kiratas, said to have been defeated by Nagabhatta II[112], was situated in the jungles of Gokarna to the north-east of Pasupati.[113] The identification is further strengthened by a tradition in the **Swayambhupurana** that Dharmapala occupied the throne of Nepal.

He was succeeded by Devapala. Devapala is said to have conquered the whole of northern India from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas and from eastern to the western ocean.[114] He inherited the territories of his father and consolidated them to a great extent. He ruled over the whole of Bihar and undivided Bengal. According to the Munger **CP**, his empire was bounded on the north by the Himalayas.[115] This is further supported by the Garuda Pillar inscription[116] of Narayanapala. He subjugated the king of Kamrup and defeated king Bhoja of the Gurjara-Pratihara line.[117]

The brilliance of the Palas began to decline after the death of Devapala. Though it was not "reduced to non-entity"[118], their past achievements certainly do not compare favourably with the later Palas after Devapala, who was succeeded by Surapala or Vigrahapala I. Sinha takes them to be two different persons.[119] Vigrahapala I was not a very powerful king. He was succeeded by his son Narayanapala. By that time the Gurjara-Pratihara had also begun to extend their arms for more and more dominions. The glorious victory of Nagabhatta II against mighty Dharmapala had facilitated their task though they were checked for some time after the defeat of Mihirabhoja by Devapala. The struggle continued after Devapala and Bhoja turned his attention towards Bengal.

The Bhagalpur grant of Narayanapala, which was issued when the king was staying at Mudgagiri, records the grant of a village **Makutika** to the temple of Siva at Kalsapota, situated in the **kaksa visaya** of Tirabhukti. The record is an indelible proof of the fact that Narayanapala held sway over Tirabhukti till the seventeenth year of his reign as no king can make any grant in a place where he has no sway. He boasts of having built one thousand temples of Siva in the said locality.[120] Being hardpressed he might have concentrated in the region of Tirabhukti. The Palas were rulers of Varendri, Tirabhukti and Magadha in the early years of the reign of Narayanapala. In the latter part of his reign Magadha, Varendri and possibly East Bengal passed into the hands of Pratihara Mahendrapala and about this time



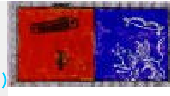
the Palas retired to Tirabhukti.[121] Gandak and Son were the dividing lines between the Palas and the Pratiharas. Between the seventeenth year (the date of Bhagalpur grant) and the fifty-fourth year (the date of the Bihar Image Inscription), we have no dated records of Narayanapala. The Pala kingdom, during this period of thirty-seven years, fell on its bad days and it was during this period that the Pratiharas made headway in the province of Bihar. Amoghavarsa also invaded Bihar during this period[122], and conquered Anga, Vanga and Magadha. He was followed by Krsna II in his expedition.[123]

PALA-PRATIHARA CONTEST IN MITHILA FOR SUPREMACY

The Pratiharas aimed at building up an all north Indian Empire but they were checked by Devapala. Neither the Bhagalpur **CP** nor the Badal Pillar Inscription speaks of any of his successes against his adversaries. From the Gwalior Inscription[124] of 876, we learn that Bhoja was desirous of conquering the three worlds. He possibly won a victory over the Palas after the seventeenth year of Narayanapala in 880 AD. Bhoja ousted Narayanapala from Magadha and extended his sway up to Himalayas in the north. Narayanapala seems to have restored his authority in the fifty-fourth year of his reign. Narayanapala was succeeded by Rajyapala.

Bhoja was succeeded by Mahendrapala in 885. He launched his offensive against the Palas with the sole intention of controlling the trade routes running down the Ganges. He made attempts to push forward his frontier. Bhoja had already paved the way and so the task was very easy for Mahendrapala.[125] It was under Mahendrapala that the Pratihara empire reached its high watermark. His inscriptions have been found in south and north Bihar. During the period of the Pratihara domination, Pala dominion was limited to western Bengal and north part of the Gangetic delta.[126] He held authority in south Bihar and north Bengal down to the end of his reign. The Dighwa-Dubauli plate[127] of 898-99 AD of Mahendrapala concerns a village about twenty-five miles south-east of Gopalganj in Saran district. His hold over a portion of north Bihar is thus proved. The plate refers to the grant of a village named Paniyakagrama. On the basis of this solitary evidence it is not possible to agree with the view that he extended his authority in the whole of “Tithut region”[128], nor is it reasonable to accept that “the Gurjaras gradually pushed up their conquests eastward along the northern bank of the Ganga, till in the thirteenth year of Mahendrapala, the whole of Tirabhukti and north Bengal seem to have been annexed by the Pratiharas leaving the rest to the Palas.”[129] The Dighwa-Dubauli plate does not necessarily mean the loss of the whole of Tirabhukti as R D Banerji thinks.[130] The probability is that after completing his Magadhan conquest, Mahendrapala made a dash towards Mithila but failed to conquer the whole of it. While the Sagartalai Inscription of Bhoja bear testimony to his achievements in the region of Bengal, a large number of inscriptions of Mahendrapala found in south Bihar and one in north Bihar prove the extension of his authority in eastern India.[131]

During the reign of Rajyapala the Gurjatas crossed the Sone, overran Tirhut. H C Ray holds that during the reign of Rajyapala the Gurjaras conquered the whole of Tirhut.[132] This is a further proof of the fact that Mahendrapala did not succeed in annexing the whole of Mithila because if that had been the case there was no necessity of conquering the region again in the time of Rajyapala. All these go to show that the Pratiharas’ invasion of Tirhut did not end in permanent occupation of the area and they could not succeed to consolidate their conquests in north Bihar. They came, conquered, and returned with



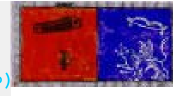
whatever booty they got. The fall of the Pratiharas let loose the forces of disruption which proved no less disastrous. The Chandellas and the Kalachuris tried to establish their political supremacy in the wake of Pratihara withdrawal from north Bihar and the Palas had to bear the brunt of aggressive imperialism.

THE NATURE OF CHANDELLA INVASION OF MITHILA

Yasovarmana and his son Dhanga, the Chandella kings, followed a policy of crippling the resources of the east Indian rulers. In the middle of the tenth century AD, the Pala kingdom was passing through a period of stress and strain. The Kambojas deprived the Palas of their sovereignty of Gauda and established their supremacy over that country. The Pala king Gopala II was forced to take shelter in Magadha, and Mithila.[133] The Jajilpa plate issued in the sixth regnal year of Gopala II records the grant of a locality in Pundravardhanabhukti.[134] By this time the Chandella had established their sway in Jejabhukti in the first quarter of the ninth century AD. The sixth ruler of the dynasty, Sriharsa, launched a successful policy of territorial aggrandisement.

Yasovarmana defeated the Pratihara emperor and launched a scheme of **Digvijaya**. He invaded the territories of the Palas and the Kambojas and is said to have conquered Gauda and Mithila.[135] Verse 23 of the Khajuraho inscription[136] contains the only reference to Mithila in the Chandella records. Do they furnish sufficient evidence to warrant the assumption that Yasovarmana had conquered it. Other contemporary rulers also claim to have conquered the same region.[137] Yasovarmana is said to have obtained an easy victory over the Gaudas, who proved to be no better than pleasure creeper to his sword. He was “a sword to cut down the Gaudas as if they were the pleasure-creepers .... and weakened the Maithilas.” (Verse – 23). His Gauda contemporary is identified with Rajyapala or his son Gopala II. The Pala records do not refer to any encounter with the Chandellas probably because the victory lay with the other side. The westward expansion of the Palas might have involved them with the rising power of the Chandellas. Dhanga also claims victories against the rulers of Radha and Anga.[138] The records show that the **digvijaya** attributed to Yasovarmana in the Khajuraho inscription of Dhanga (dated 954) is not an empty boast or inherent improbability. It is clear that the attributed invasion was no more than a raid and there was no annexation of Mithila to the Chandella empire.

The invasion seems to have taken place in 954 AD. By that time the Palas had recovered Mithila from the Pratiharas.[139] The description in the Khajuraho epigraph presents a tragic contrast to Kalhana’s tribute to the courage and intrepidity and other martial qualities of Gaudas.[140] Though the actual extent of the Chandella dominion in the verse 45 of the Khajuraho inscription no. 2 is not explicit, it does not refer to the incorporation of Bengal and Mithila. Our contention thus stands verified that the invasion was nothing more than a raid. There is no doubt that the Gaudas meant the Palas and the invasion took place during the reign of Gopala II (940-60). The Chandellas regarded them as their political enemy. Since the Palas were admittedly weak, Yasovarmana led his expedition against them. The Palas seem to have been the **Prakrityamitra** of the Chandellas.[141] Yasovarmana’s invasion was followed by his son Dhanga and all these made the Pala power sufficiently weak and enabled the Kambojas to rise. After Dhanga’s retirement, the Palas regained their lost territory.



The separate mention of Mithila in the Khajuraho epigraph has led the scholars to make wild conjectures in the realm of history. The Chandella invasion was just like a wave and it subsided soon as is evident by the restoration of Pala power in Mithila under Mahipala I. "**Sithilah Mithilah**" may mean that the people of Mithila or the Maithilas as a whole were idle and indolent. The expression does not indicate the independent status of Mithila. Following Sen (**HAIB** – 366), Sinha and Thakur have reached the conclusion that Mithila was then a separate independent state (**DKM** – 400) and Thakur has suggested that the territory of Mithila was conquered and wrested away from the Gurjaras and the Chandellas (**TM** – 213). We have already shown the improbability of these views. The Palas were in possession of Tirhut while the Gurjaras had not completely subdued Mithila, the latter view is also subscribed to by Thakur (**TM** – 212). Mithila continued to be under the Palas and the expression in the Khajuraho inscription simply refer to some of the national characteristics of the Maithilas.[142]

Mahipala I – It was Mahipala I who again revived the glory of the Palas. The findspots of his inscription show that he was in possession of north and south Bihar.[143] He recovered his patrimony in north Bihar and extended his authority up to Benaras. His authority over north Bihar is evident from the Imadpur image inscriptions.[144] He was ruling over Tirhut and Benaras in 1026 AD.[145] Certain doubts have been raised with regard to the date and authenticity of the Imadpur image inscriptions of Mahipala I. R C Mazumdar has read the date as 148 and he refers it to the Nepali era. Relying on Levi (**Nepal** – II.188), Mazumdar says, "The dedicator of the image was an inhabitant of Nepal and hence used the Newari era."[146] Questioning the validity of Mazumdar's findings, D C Sircar says, "The figure 4 in the inscription is found in the Maithili script. ...The form of 4 in the Imadpur inscriptions was prevalent in Bihar in the age of the Palas."[147] The use of Nepali era here is not easy to explain. Tirhut scholars were numerous in Nepal at the time.

THE KALACHURIS AND MITHILA

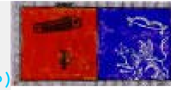
An historical evidence is cited against Mahipala I's authority in Mithila. The colophon of the Ramayana **MSS**, discovered in Nepal reads – "**Maharajadhiraja Punyavaloka Somavamsodhaya Gaudadhwaja Srimad Gangeyadeva Bhujyamana Tirbhukatau Kalyanavijayarajye Nepaladesiya Sribhans Chusalika Sri Anandadasya Patkavasthits (Kayastha) Pandits Sri Srikurasvatmaja Sri Gopati Alekhitam**." The **MSS** refers to Maharajadhiraja Punyavaloka Gangeyadeva (**Gaudadhwaja** is mentioned in a **MSS** exhibited at the Lahore session of the Indian History Congress) ruling in Tirabhukti in Samvat 1076 of an unspecified era. This has given rise to a good deal of confusion among the scholars. Bendall and others took it to be equivalent to 1019 AD and identified this Gangeyadeva with the Kalachuri king of that name.[148] This has been questioned by Levi and others. Mirashi does not agree with the above scholars and suggests the possibility of Rastrakuta domination over Tirhut.[149] R C Mazumdar identifies him with the Karnat king, Gangadeva, of Mithila.[150] This colophon, supplemented by other sources and local traditions, confirms our belief that this Gangeyadeva belonged to the Karnat dynasty of Mithila. It has been suggested by the upholders of the opposite view that Gangeyadeva defeated Mahipala and conquered Mithila. This view runs counter to the evidence furnished by the Imadpur image inscription[151], dated in the year 48 which could hardly be placed before 1019 AD, when Mithila is supposed to be under Gangeyadeva.

There is neither numismatic nor epigraphic evidence to show the authority of Gangeyadeva over Tirhut. We learn from theBheraghat inscription that Yaksakarna became famous by devastating Champaranya, identified by Kielhorn with a tract of country beyond Godavari and by H C Ray with Champaran in north Bihar.[152] The whole question centres round the Ramayana colophon with two different readings like **Garudadhvaja** and **Gaudadhvaja**. The Samvat does not specify the era. Sure and solid evidences are lacking and a simple mention in a colophon is not a sure ground for history. The identification with Kalachuri Gangeyadeva has been rightly questioned by the scholars on the following grounds:

i. That the Kalchuris never had the Viruda ending in Avaloka;
ii. This title was used by the Rastrakutas;
iii. **Gaudadhvaja** indicates some political authority of Gangeyadeva in Gauda, but the Kalachuri kings had not the pretentions to suzerainty over Bengal; and
iv. The Kalachuri is not known to have ruled over Tirhut.

Since Magadha was under the sway of the Palas, the country to the west under the Chandellas, Gangeyadeva could not have extended his rule to Tirhut. **Gaudadhvaja** exists in the colophon towards which our attention was drawn by Bendall. In another **MSS** there is **Garudadhvaja** to which Mirashi has taken recourse. There is a slight change in the **MSS** too. Thus the two words, **Gaudadhvaja** and **Garudadhvaja**, have been the point of discussion. Banerji suggested that Gangeyadeva attacked Bengal and occupied Mithila[153], and in the same strain he further observed that Mahipala obtained Varendra, Tirabhukti, Magadha and Benaras. The contradiction in this statement is quite apparent. It was before the forty-eighth year of his reign that Mahipala occupied Tirhut.[154] On the evidence of Imadpur inscription, we can say that it was Mahipala who ruled over Tirhut and not Gangeyadeva. It is evident that he was ruling in the first quarter of the eleventh century. Had Mahipala fought with Gangeyadeva for supremacy in Mithila, in that case it must have been recorded in any one of the Pala or Kalchuri records. Even the Goharva plate of Karnadeva (son of Gangeyadeva) does not say anything about his domination in Tirhut.[155]

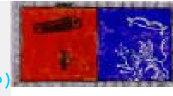
Mazumdar took the **Samvat** of the colophon to mean the Saka era and fixed it at 1154 AD and identified Gangeyadeva with the Karnat king of that name. It should be noted here that the Saka era was popular in Bengal during the time of the Senas.[156] The introduction of the Saka era in north Bihar may have been due to the establishment of the rule of the Karnata dynasty.[157] The Simraon inscription of Nanyadeva is dated in the Saka era. Madanapala was a contemporary of Gangadeva and it was possibly against this Gauda ruler that Gangadeva had to weigh his arms. The existence of Saka era in Mithila in so early a period enables us to suggest that the unspecified era of the Ramayana colophon should be referred back to the Saka year. Bendall on account of the archaic nature took it to be of Vikrama era and fixed it at 1019 AD. Scholars with the exception of R C Mazumdar and the writer of these lines have blindly followed Bendall. Sinha, even admitting that the question "is still open" has hazarded the problem by stating that "it is possible that Gangeyadeva Punyavaloka may belong to the Rastrakuta dynasty. ....This local Rastrakuta dynasty was ruling over Mithila and its member had assumed imperial titles." (**DKM** – 412). He has not adduced any argument in support of his contention. Thakur has made another wild guess when he says that "Gangadeva's supremacy in Mithila was probably the consequence of a victory over Mahipala....(who) seems to have been justified in being called a Gauda ruler by virtue of his



possession of Mithila (**TM** – 216). ....Local Rastrakuta dynasty may have ruled over Tirhut (**TM** – 218)." Neither Sinha nor Thakur has advanced any plausible argument in support of the respective views. **Thakur has accepted both the Kalachuri and the Rastrakuta domination without any foundation.** If we accept Gangeyadeva's suzerainty in Tirhut on the basis of the Ramayana colophon, in that case it appears that the area may have been lost to the Kalachuris for some time after the defeat which overwhelmed Karna during the latter part of his reign.[158] Yasah Karna may have therefore undertaken an expedition to punish its rebellious chiefs. That he succeeded in making no permanent effect in Tirhut is clear from the inscription of Alhanadevi. It seems to me that this Gangeyadeva of the colophon was none else than his namesake of the Karnata dynasty and not a Kalachuri ruler.[159] This is established by the following facts.

It has been pointed out that Mithila passed out of the hands of the Palas in 1020 AD as in that year it was in possession of Gangeyadeva.[160] R D Banerji believed that Tirabhukti was never recovered by the Palas and following him Jayaswal suggested that the Chedis ruled in Mithila for near about a century.[161] The recent discoveries have yielded sufficient materials to show that Mithila was not only held by the Palas but it was also one of the important centres of the Pala administration. According to Banerji, forty-eighth year of Mahipala should be earlier than 1020 AD when Gangeyadeva was ruling. According to Taranatha, Mahipala ruled for fifty-two years which must have been over by 1023-24 and the Sarnath Inscription, referring to Gaudeswara, is dated 1026 AD. On this basis also, it can be said that forty-eighth year of Mahipala's reign was later than 1019-20 AD[162] by which date Mahipala is said to have recovered Tirhut. On account of the strength of the available source material, Sinha has been compelled to admit that "there is no other evidence to prove Gangeyadeva supremacy over Tirhut"[163] (**DKM** – 409). Even the Piawan inscription[164] (verse 24) which gives a definite account of his conquest, does not explicitly refer to Tirhut. Mahipala ruled between 988 and 1038 and north Bihar was a part of the Pala empire since the days of Narayanapala, if not earlier. The Pratiharas had captured only a part of it and that also was later on acquired by the Palas. Since the colophon itself is open to serious objections, it does not admit of any verification. In view of the above facts it is not sound to rely on this colophon unless further corroborative evidence is forthcoming.[165] The latest writer on the subject Petech has supported my contention that this Gangeyadeva belonged to the Karnata dynasty of Mithila.[166] He says, "Mirashi's objection to Mazumdar's theory are not decisive. The strongest point is that Gangeyadeva of the colophon belongs to the lunar race, while Nanyadeva and Gangadeva are stated to be Suryavamsi by the Pratapamalla inscription of 1649. But no actual record of the Karnata dynasty says anything on this score, and this inscription is too late to be authoritative. ....Gangeyadeva is Gangadeva and that he lived in Saka 1076, i.e., 1154 AD.[167] Thus on the basis of all available materials it can be said with some amount of certainty that this Gangeyadeva of the colophon was the Karnata king of Mithila, son of Nanyadeva."

There are some evidence to show that the Kalachuris made some devastating raids into the territory of Mithila when the Palas were also strengthening their hold on this part. Between 1041 and 1072, the Chedi-Kalachuris made a dash towards Bihar under Laksmi Karna. He renewed with great vigour his hostility against the Gaudas. Karna had two Gauda contemporaries – Nayapala and Vigrahapala III. The Karanabela inscription assigns to Karna a victory over Gauda Nayapala[168] who is said to have defeated



Karna. Vigrahapala III is also said to have defeated Karna and married the latter's daughter Yauvanasri. Karna possibly led a second invasion against Vigrahapala III before the 17th year of the latter's reign (the date of the Bangaon copper plate inscription of Vigrahapala III). A treaty between the two contending forces was brought about through the mediation of Atisa Dipankara.[169] According to Sandhyakar Nandi, it was a **Kapalasandhi**[170] (**RC** – I.9), on the basis of which Karna was protected by Vigrahapala III. This type of treaty indicated a subordinate status for Karna who gave his daughter Yauvanasri in marriage to Vigrahapala. The Bangaon **CP** proves beyond any shadow of doubt that Tirabhukti was in possession of the Palas till the 17th year and the Naulagarh inscription proves that north Bihar was under him till the twenty-fourth year of his reign. It seems here that Karna had to buy peace. The Kalachuris again raised their head and expanded their power. Following Jayaswal, Thakur suggested that "his (Karna's) sway over Benaras and Mithila remained unshaken."[171] In face of the Bangaon **CP**, Naulagarh inscription and the Ramacharita, it is not possible to agree with the above contention. Vigrahapala III's authority over entire Mithila is an established fact (Infra). Karna's son Yasahkarna (1072-1125) claims to have devastated Champaranya (modern Champaran in north Bihar) in two aggressive campaigns. This event is known to us from the Bheraghat inscription.[172] That he succeeded in making no permanent no permanent impression in Tirhut is clear from the inscription. It was only a raid. The Kahala plate of Kalachuri Sodhadeva suggests that the grant in question was issued after bathing in Gandaki.[173]

The Kalachuris like the Chandellas failed to establish their sway in north Bihar, which remained the cradle of the Palas till the rise of the Karnatas. It was in the reign of Mahipala that Rajendra Chola invaded Bengal but north Bihar escaped the disaster. Mahipala was succeeded by Nayapala. His reign witnessed the disintegration of the Palas and the rise of the Kalachuri Chedis. The recent discovery of some Pala inscription points to the existence of their unabated authority in north Bihar. The inscriptions from Naulagarh and one **CP** from Bangaon have been discovered in north Bihar. All these belong to the time of Vigrahapala III. When pressed from all sides by their contemporary enemies the Palas seem to have concentrated in Tirabhukti where they had one of their **Jayaskandhavaras** at Kanchanpur. Tirabhukti was an important centre of Pala administration (Infra). Prior to the discovery of Imadpur image inscription, it was believed by scholars like Jayaswal that the Palas ruled over Bihar excluding Mithila.[174]

On account of the frequent foreign invasions the Pala power had been considerably weakened. While the political power of the Palas was on the wane, Chalukya invaders under Vikramaditya took place in the reign of Vigrahapala III. Mahasivagupta of Orissa also invaded Bengal and the Kalachuris were already knocking at the door. The Palas in Magadha were reduced to non-entity and the Pala power was just a shadow of its former brilliance and glow. Thus, ousted from south Bihar and Bengal, Vigrahapala III tried to strengthen his position in north Bihar. The grant of village Vishanpur in the Pundravardhanabhukti in the Amgachi **CP** may be, tentatively, identified with the village Visnupur in Purnea district.[175] He seems to have strengthened his position in north Bihar from Purnea to Champaran, the latter occasionally raided by the Kalachuris.

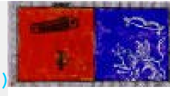
Viewed in this background, the Bangaon **CP**, the Naulagarh inscription and a silver coin of Vigrahapala III (since lost) throw refreshing light in the history of the Palas in north Bihar. The extant remains of a fort at Naulagarh may indicate its strategic importance on its being close to the Ganges and also because of

its administrative importance. The Pala remains have been discovered from the adjoining sites like Birpur, Baraipura, Jayamanglagarh and some parts of Darbhanga and Saharsa. The Naulagarh inscription refers to the 24th regnal year of Vigrahapala III.[176] The Bangaon **CP** is all the more important in this respect. It was issued from the Jayaskandhavar Kanchanpur and it records the grant of land in a locality called Vasukavartta in the Hodrey Visaya of Tirabhukti. The donee was an inhabitant of Ittahaka or Ituhoka. It refers to the seventeenth regnal year of Vigrahapala III, son of Nayapala. The **Dutaka** seems to have been the mantri Prahasitaraja, described as a son of the king. The donee came to Tirabhukti from Kolancha.[177] These two inscriptions prove that the Palas were entrenched in the districts of north Munger, Saharsa, Darbhanga, Purnea, Muzaffarpur and Champaran. On account of its close proximity to Gorakhpur, Champaran possibly fell prey to the devastating Kalachuri raid.

The place names of the Bangaon CP can be tentatively identified. Jayaskandhavar Kanchanpur is to be identified with Kandaha, a village near the findspot of the inscription. Kandaha was a famous place till the 15th century AD and an inscription of the Oinwara king of Mithila is still seen there on the temple gates (**JBORS** - XX.15 ff). The whole area is dotted with mounds though now thoroughly destroyed by the ravages of the Kosi. The popular tradition associates with the headquarters of a government in the days of yore. Thus the Bangaon CP adds a new name to the list of Pala-Jayaskandhavaras, viz., Kanchanpur yet unknown from any Pala record. Fortunately, this temporary capital lay in Tirabhukti. Hodrey visaya is to be identified with the modern village of Hardi, associated with famous Lorik balled, which is as old as the 14th century AD., if not earlier as it is mentioned by Jyotiriswara. Hodrey was a visaya of Tirabhukti. While the Kaksa visaya of the Bhagalpur **CP** remains to be identified, there is hardly any doubt with regard to Hodrey which is decidedly Hardi. The local tradition confirms this view. Village Vasukavartta was situated in the Hodrey visaya. Vasukavartta is to be identified with village Vasudeva near Bangaon and I am told that the village directory contains a reference to this village. Ittahaka is to be identified with Etaha near by or Itahari near Ghailar in Madhipura subdivision of the district of Saharsa. The above identification is open to correction. The Naulagarh inscription refers to Krimila visaya. Another inscription from Naulagarh refers to a **Vihara**, the name of which is blurred and illegible.

TIRABHUKTI – A CENTRE OF THE PALA ADMINISTRATION IN NORTH BIHAR

The Bhagalpur grant, Bangaon **CP** and the Naulagarh inscription enable us to suggest that Tirabhukti was one of the important administrative centres during the period of Pala rule. Tirabhukti was one of the provinces of the Pala empire. In Tirabhukti lay one of the temporary capitals of the Palas. From the Pala records it appears that there were two important visayas, viz., Kaksa visaya, and Hodrey visaya. Krimila visaya of the Naulagarh inscription seems to have extended up to the region of Naulagarh in north Munger. The Pala empire was divided into the **bhuktis**, visayas, mandalas, patakas, gramas, etc. Some portion of north Bihar seems to have been included in the Pundravardhanabhukti while the rest lay in Tirabhukti. The most curious thing about the Palas is that they do not give us any clue about the location of their capital. Munger, Tirabhukti and Pataliputra are described as temporary capitals. The Pala inscriptions give us the names of the visayas, mandalas, villages in Tirabhukti. The establishment of a vast empire brought in its train a number of feudatories who wielded sufficient powers. From the Bangaon **CP** it appears that an officer of the king made the grant out of his own fief and it was simply confirmed by the king. The Pala records refer to a number of feudal chiefs. From the Bangaon **CP**, it

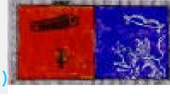


appears that there were governors, high ministers of state, military officials, record-keepers, judicial officers, collectors of tolls and custom dues, custom inspector of police, controller of criminal tribes, collectors of ferry dues, keeper of records. There was a special officer in-charge of land under cultivation. The empire seems to have been divided into a number of provinces and the latter were divided into visayas, mandalas, gramas respectively. While the viceroys were appointed for the Bhuktis, Visayapati was in-charge of visaya, mandaleswara of mandalas and gramapati of the gramas. Village was the lowest unit of administration. Whenever a gift of any village was made, a total description about the locality was given in the charter to avoid any further confusion and that is evident from the Bangaon **CP**. We learn about the Kalasapota and Makutika from the Bhagalpur grant, Vasukavartta, Ittahaka or Ituhoka from the Bangaon **CP** and Krimila from the Naulagarh inscription. Tirabhukti had two visayas – Kaksa and Hodrey though the Krimila visaya seems to have extended up to the Begusarai district.

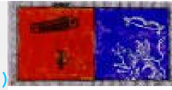
The Pala rulers claimed sovereignty in north Bihar after Vigrahapala III. Mithila remained a part of the Pala empire till the rise of Nanyadeva. Verse 4 of the Kamsuli grant affirms that Ramapala spread the glory by gaining the country of Janaka (**EI** – II.355). Sandhyakar Nandi mentions Varendri as the **Janakabhu** of the Palas. **Janakabhu** of the grant should be taken to mean Varendri and not Mithila as has been done by some. The Bangad grant of Mahipala also refers to the paternal kingdom of the Palas. During the period of Kaivartta revolt and after the loss of Varendri, the Pala kingdom was limited to northern and central Bihar.[178] It is not unlikely that during the period of the Kaivartta revolt, the Karnatas entrenched themselves in Tirabhukti. A 'new danger' which confronted Ramapala on the eve of his fight with Kaivartta Bhima, mentioned in the **RC**, may be referring to the establishment of the Karnata power in Mithila under Nanyadeva.[179] Mithila was the northern border of the Pala kingdom. After or even during the reign of Ramapala, Mithila was lost to the Palas. There is nothing to prove that Ramapala attempted 'a partial rejuvenation'[180] because we find that the Pala kingdom was torn asunder by internal strife and external pressure and the Pala rulers immediately following Ramapala had only a shadowy existence in the negligible part in south Bihar.

Without any basis of facts and sources, Thakur has suggested that Parmara Bhoja of Malwa held sway over Mithila (**TM** – 223). Since the 'volumes of maithili legends' cannot be accepted as the basis of history, we cannot subscribe to the views of the learned scholar. There is no such reference in any of the Parmara records. Bhoja is said to have been ousted by the Kalachuris. The Parmaras and the Kalachuris were brought to their knees by the southern invaders in the last quarter of the 11th century AD. Chalukya Someswara I (1040-1069) and his son Vikramaditya carried their arms successfully against a number of rulers in north India. They claim to have established their sway over Nepal and an inscription of Someswara III, son of Vikramaditya VI, claims to have placed his feet upon the kings of Andhra, Dravids, Magadha and Nepal.[181] As a result of these southern invasions three kingdoms were established in the last decade of the 11th century in Kannauj, Mithila and Bengal. After the passing away of Karna, Chandradeva established his kingdom at Kannauj[182] and the Gahadawalas after him extended their sway up to the district of Munger in Bihar.

THE GAHADAWALAS



Jayaswal believed that had a barrier not arisen in Tirhut, the Gahadawal march would not have stopped at Ayodhya.[183] From the Maner **CP** and Larplates and the recently discovered inscriptions in Shahabad district, it appears that they ruled over a major portion of south Bihar.[184] The **Prakrita-paingalam** states that the king of Kasi (Govindachandra) fought successfully with the kings of Gauda, Vanga, Telanga, Maharastra, Saurastra, Champaran, Nepal, Bhota, China, Lohavara (Lahore). The king of the west against whom Vijayasena advanced through the upper course of the Ganges was in all probability Govindachandra. Nanyadeva of Mithila was the immediate neighbour of Govindachandra and there might have been a clash between the two (Infra). Govindachandra came into conflict with the Palas, the Senas, the Gangeyas, the Kakatiyas, the Chalukyas, the Chandellas, the Muslims and the Karnatas of Mithila.[185]



CHAPTER VII

THE KARNATAS OF MITHILA (1097-1325)

GENERAL INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

As late as the twelfth century AD, Mithila was the capital of Videha.[1] We learn from the **Vividhakalpatirtha** (C. VS 14th century) that Videha was a Janapada of eastern India and was popularly known as Tirhut. We learn further from the Jain literary sources that Vaisali was one of the capitals of Mithila.[2] Mithila in ancient times was bounded on the east by Kausiki, on the west by Gandaki, on the south by the Ganges and on the north by the Himalayas. From east to west its length was 120 miles and from north to south 125 miles. The year 1097 AD forms a landmark in the history of Mithila as it was in that very year that Nanyadeva founded the Karnata dynasty. The foundation of the Karnata dynasty constitutes a new epoch in the history of Bihar in general and Mithila in particular. After the fall of the Videhas of Mithila and the Vajjian confederacy, this was the first historic dynasty that ruled independently for about two hundred twenty five years and the historians have the advantage of being able to follow the fortunes of a single ruling dynasty.

The whole of north India was then in ferment and the forces of disintegration had raised their heads. Viewed in that background, the establishment of the Karnata dynasty of Mithila marks a turning point in the history of north-eastern India. The rule of this dynasty is one of the most eventful periods in Indian history. The Karnatas were the last independent Hindu rulers of north-eastern India. The period of instability (550-1097 AD) in the history of Mithila gave way to a period of stabilisation and the foundation of the rule of this dynasty ushered into a new era of all round progress and glorious achievements. The history of the Karnatas may be studied under the following headings:

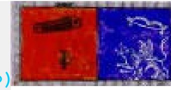
I. Origin of the Karnatas of Mithila;
II. Nanyadeva;
III. Malladeva and Gangadeva;
IV. Narasimhadeva;
V. Ramasimhadeva;
VI. Saktisimhadeva;
VII. Harisimhadeva;
VIII. Administrative system of the Karnatas of Mithila; and
IX. Decline of the Karnatas.

I. **ORIGIN OF THE KARNATAS OF MITHILA**

The sources at our disposal do not enable us to form a correct picture about the origin of the Karnatas of Mithila. The association of the Karnatas can be traced back to the Munger **CP** of Devapala and other Pala inscriptions up to the time of Madanapala. These statements about the Karnatas leave no doubt that they originally belonged to the south.[3] Like his counterpart in Bengal[4], Nanyadeva is called **Karnatakulabhusana** and **Karnataksatriya** in the Mithila tradition. The Senas were also known as the **Karnataksatriya** from verse iv of the Madhainagar grant and the Naihati grant of Ballalasena.[5] It can be safely assumed on the basis of this grant that some Karnata officials actually acquired political power and set up an independent kingdom for themselves. We know that the storming of the capital of the Parmar king Bhoja I and the destruction of the Kalachuri king Karna by Someswara I (1040-1069) facilitated the path of Karnata domination in the north Indian politics. The Karnatas of Mithila hailed from Deccan in the wake of Chalukya invaders Someswara I and Vikramaditya VI.[6] Vikramaditya led victorious campaign against Gauda and Kamarupa and the Chalukya's emergence in the north Indian politics had a very significant effect on the then political condition. Vikramaditya VI's son Someswara III is described as having placed his feet upon the heads of the kings of Andhra, Dravida, Magadha and Nepal.[7] Their emergence in north Indian politics ushered in a new epoch. The destruction of the Paramars by the Chalukyas is supported by the Basahi plate of Govindachandra Gahadawala of Kannauj.[8] The dynasties of Kannauj, Mithila and Bengal were the direct results of the Chalukya invasion of north India. R C Mazumdar has rightly observed that 'the deluge of the Karnata invasion ushered in three new dynasties at Kannauj, Mithila and Bengal.'[9]

According to Nilkantha Shastri, the emergence of the Karnatas in the Pala inscriptions is fictitious and it should not be inferred that there was any Karnata element in the Pala population in Bengal or Magadha. The frequent mention of the Karnatas in those inscriptions leaves no doubt that they were employed by the Palas as important officials and they took advantage of the situation when the supreme authority became weak. The Karnata invasion from south facilitated their path of progress. Acha, a feudatory of Vikramaditya VI, is represented to have conquered large territories for his master. The Tamil poem **Kalingattupparani**, describing the Chola conquest of north Kalinga, gives a long list of peoples who paid tributes to Kullotunga, the Chola king (1070-1118).[10] This account of the poetical work is further supported by the **Draksarama inscription**.[11] The Chola conquest included Vangas, Vangalas, and Magadhas. It was about this time that the Karnatas were also heading towards this region. The Pala territory which included Mithila seems to have been invaded by these two groups of southerners and Ramapala might have sought to make an alliance with the Cholas for securing support against the common enemy, that is, the Karnatas.[12] Sandhyakara Nandi's **Ramacharita** suggests that 'Varendri was successfully guarded against the Karnatas.' While Acha carried arms into Bengal, the Palas had to face two rising Karnata chiefs, viz., Vijayasena in Bengal and Nanyadeva in Mithila.[13]

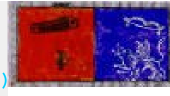
Another important theory put forward by a set of scholars is that the Karnatas were merely the results of the revival of the eclipsed Karnata power in Magadha.[14] The supporters of this theory believe that Rajendra Chola Gangaikonda had a powerful imagination and grip of the political situation of north India and he made a bid for supremacy in that part. The Tirumalai inscription and the inscription no. 44 at Kolar[15] give the achievements of his conquests in the following words: "....attacked Vangaladesa from which Govindachandra fled and took the territory where the monsoon never ceases."[16] He is said to



have defeated Mahipala.[17] Kielhorn believes that Mahipala referred to in the Chola inscription is the first Pala ruler of that name. A critical study of the contemporary records shows that the Chola conquest did not affect in any way the political condition of Bengal and neighbouring countries. Aiyangar suggested that Dandabhukti denoted Bihar with Orissa, a view not accepted by others. There was a family of the Rastrakuta Karnatas in the region of Dandabhukti planted by either Dhruva or Govinda III; Dharmapala of Dandabhukti was probably a relative of Gauda ruling over the territory of the eclipsed Karnatas. M Ramakrisna Kavi believes that the Rastrakutas were the Karnatas and after their decline in 970 AD in the south, they moved towards the north.[18] Mr Kavi fails to give any plausible explanation for the so-called migration of the Rastrakutas from south to north. If the view about the Rastrakutas' expansion in the north be accepted, it is quite likely that the Karnatas moved along with the Chalukyas and when further strengthened by the fresh Chalukya invasion, they asserted their independence in the last decade of the eleventh century of the Christian era. Nanyadeva is said to be a brother of Kirttiraja who is known to us from the Bodhgaya inscription of Tunga Dharmavaloka. The identification lacks corroborative evidence and cannot be accepted as such in the present state of our knowledge.[19]

Someswara's **Chanda-kausika** says that Mahipala of the Pala dynasty defeated the Karnata Raja who had invaded Bengal.[20] The **MSS** is dated 1331 and refers indirectly to a contest between Mahipala and the Karnatas. The Chalukyas of Kalyan were at this period rulers of Karnata but none of the contemporary inscriptions of the Chalukya sovereigns refer to any conflict with the Palas. R P Chanda is of opinion that the Karnatas were soldiers who are known to have invaded Mahipala's kingdom.[21] H P Sastri believed that the people defeated by Mahipala might have been connected with those Karnatas who are believed to have established later on in Bengal and Mithila. In the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to be precise with regard to the time as to when these Karnatas first settled in Bihar and Bengal. As has been shown above, they seem to have formed an element in the Pala administration and Pala grants bear testimony to the fact. The series of southern invasions of northern India may have quite possibly been responsible for the regular inflow of Karnata settlers in Bihar and Bengal. The fresh wave of **Karnatakendu** Vikramaditya VI only gave them impetus to stabilise their position as independent rulers after the local central authority had become weak[22] and incapable of keeping in control the forces of disintegration.

If the theory of the Rastrakuta Karnatas living in Dandabhukti be accepted, in that case it can be asserted that the Karnatas were the results, not of the Chola conquests, but merely of a revival of the eclipsed Karnata power of the Magadha. Jayaswal was of opinion that the Karnatas were remnants of the Chola army or more likely a remnant of the Karnata allies of Karna who is said to have overrun Mithila between 1040 and 1060 AD. Here we have to bear in mind that Karna's expedition took place about forty years before the accession of Nanyadeva[23]. R D Banerji also suggested that the Karnatas were remnants of the Chola army[24], and Jayaswal seems to have simply followed Banerji in his assertion.[25] The view held by Banerji and Jayaswal is highly improbable as there is nothing to show that the Karnatas formed part of the Chola army. This view has been rejected by a number of scholars.[26] Regarding the suggestion that the Karnatas were remnants of the Karnata allies of Karna, we have to bear in mind that Karna's alliance with them was of a purely temporary character.[27] It appears from the **Nagpur prasasti** of Udayaditya that the Karnatas associated themselves with the Chedi king Karna who



with their help overran Malwa like a sea.[28] On this authority and following Jayaswal and Banerji, B C Sen has suggested that 'this alliance probably facilitated the movements that soon after Karna's death made a Karnata warrior called Nanya the ruler of Mithila.'[29] Jayaswal erroneously believed that since Mithila had already belonged to the Chedi sovereign, the Karnata families had come in Karna's train.[30] We shall see how this view is untenable in face of modern researches.

The reasonable view seems to be that before the Palas could take advantage of the difficulties of the Kalachuris, the Palas had to face an invasion from the Chalukyas of Karnata.[31] The earliest raid of the Chalukya must have taken place before 1053 AD.[32] Another important Chalukya expedition was taken towards Vanga and the neighbouring countries at the close of the eleventh century AD[33] or beginning of the twelfth century AD. The successive southern inroads enabled the local chieftains to assert their authority. Thakur[34] has also followed Banerji and Jayaswal. It has been further pointed out that Nanyadeva was a junior contemporary of Dharmapal of Kamarupa.[35] The **Kalikapurana**, compiled in the reign of Dharmapal, has got the earliest reference in the **Bharatabhasya** of Nanyadeva. Bassattariya Brahmana families in Assam came probably from Mithila which was famous for Tantricism at that time. The purpose of the **Purana** was to establish some connection of Kamarupa with Mithila.

Nanyadeva was a **Karnataksatriya** and there is possibly no doubt about it as it would appear from his epithets applied off and on. The commentary on Bharata's **Natyasastra** reveals to us that he was called **Karnatakulabhusana**. Jayaswal believes that his name is only a sanskritised form of Dravidian '**Nanniya**' meaning affectionate.[36] Nanniya, Nanyapa and other such names of Nanyadeva are known to us from the tradition current in Mithila and preserved by such traditional writers as Mr P Jha in his **Mithilatattwavimarsa** and Rasbeharidas in his **Mithiladarpana**. The Deopara inscription unmistakably calls Vijayasena a scion of the Karnata race and Nanyadeva is also mentioned therein. In the last quarter of the 11th century AD, when the southerners were disturbing the political life of north India, the Karnatas gained a permanent footing in the eastern part of north India and carved out for themselves small independent kingdoms which were destined to play very important role in the following centuries.[37] In the present state of our knowledge, it is desirable to connect the rise of the Karnatas in Mithila with the victorious military expeditions of the Chalukyas. Nanya's ancestors were petty chieftains and adventurers in eastern India and taking advantage of the chaotic situation, Nanya or his ancestor seems to have asserted independence.[38] The revolt must have coincided with the Chalukya invasion during the reign of Vikramaditya VI. The Karnatas of Mithila have been called **Karnatachudamani** in the Nepal inscriptions[39], **Karnatavamsodbhava**, and **Karnatadhipa**[40] by Chandeswara, Kannada speaking barons from Deccan[41], a southerner in a recent Marathi work[42] and **Karnatakulalaksmi** in the Sena inscriptions.[43]

As late as 1162 AD Nepal is mentioned as a vassal state of Someswara III in the Pattadakal stone inscription.[44] The unstable condition of Nepal and surrounding area is well attested by a number of epigraph and **Vamsavali** sources. In view of all these sources, it is plausible to hold that 'the forefathers of Nanya established themselves as feudatory chiefs in Tirhut, on the border of Nepal, as a result of the successive raids by the great Chalukya prince to the foothills of the Himalayan range ....and after the withdrawal of the strong Chalukyan arm, they rose to pre-eminence, broke off their allegiance and established themselves as rulers of Tirhut.'[45] Nanya was the first ruler of this dynasty. He established his

supremacy over this region with the help of the Chalukya king Vikramaditya VI. Levi holds that Nanyadeva at first accepted service under some unknown king, and taking advantage of the weakness of the master, wielded sovereignty. It is well known fact that even the Pala rulers had appointed sufficient number of Karnata officers under them. D C Ganguly is of opinion that Nanyadeva was an officer under the Palas and established a kingdom in Tirabhukti during the Kaivartta revolt. "A new danger which confronted Ramapala on the eve of his fight with Kaivartta Bhima, mentioned in the **Ramacharita**, may be referring to this incident."[46] According to a tradition which is not to be rejected outright, Nanyadeva, or more correctly Nanyapadeva founded in the year 1097 Simarouna, the ancient capital of the province of Mithila situated in the Nepal terrain, in the ruins of which statues and idols have been found.[47] The available evidence enable us to suggest that the Karnatas of Mithila were southerners. They possibly came in the wake of various successive southern invasions of northern India and settled in different parts. The Karnatas seem to have been powerful **Samanta** in the valley of Nepal and the Terai area and during the reign of Ramapala, they took advantage of the weakness of the Palas and established an independent dynasty. The Karnatas ruled Mithila from 1097 to 1324-25 AD.

NANYADEVA (1097-1147)

Nanyadeva founded the Karnata dynasty in 1097 AD. After the weakening of the Pala rule, the whole of northern India was in ferment and the forces of disintegration had set in. The Gahadawalas strengthened themselves in Kannauj, the Senas in Bengal and the Karnatas in Mithila. Ramapala was thus confronted with enemies on all sides. Besides the Senas and the Karnatas, Ramapala had to face the onslaughts of Kumarapala of Gauda and Yadava ruler Harivarmana of Vanga. Nanyadeva made north Bihar independent and laid the foundation of the Karnata dynasty which was destined to rule as an independent kingdom for about two centuries and a quarter.

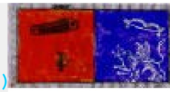
DATE OF NANYADEVA: Much ink has flown since the advent of this century over the question of the date and accession of Nanyadeva. Till very recently, there was no succinct and chronological account of the Karnatas of Mithila, though there were scattered materials here and there. The first connected account of the history of Mithila was published in the **JASB** (New Series) of 1915 by Manmohan Chakravarti. The learned scholar placed Nanyadeva in the 12th century AD.[48] Kielhorn placed Nanyadeva in the Saka era 1019 or 1097 AD. The date of Nanyadeva is known to us from the so-called Simaraon stone pillar inscription and the exact replica of the text is preserved in the Nepal Vamsavali records. The so-called verse was brought to the notice of the learned public by the late Pandit Chanda Jha in his edition of the text of Vidyapati's **Purusapariksa**.[49] It is believed that the fort at Simaraongarh was built by Nanyadeva himself. Regarding this inscription, it has been pointed out by a competent authority that in the whole domain of Bengal and Magadha antiquities, there is not another record with such a date of marvellous accuracy. It states that Nanyadeva made an erection in a **simhalagna** (that is, early morning) of a Saturday in a solar sravana, the **tithi** being **sukla** seven and the **naksatra swati** in the year 1019 Saka[50], **that is**, on July 10, 1097 AD. Levi has read the verse with slight variations here and there.[51]

There are conflicting evidence and information about Nanyadeva in the Nepali sources. M Chakravarti's fixation of Nanya's date is based on the synchronism of Malladeva (son of Nanyadeva) and the Gahadawala king Jayachandra (1170-1193). Since Malladeva is said to have served under Jayachandra,

Chakravarti seems to have placed Nanyadeva in the middle of the 12th century AD simply to prove the contention of Vidyapati.[52] Malladeva is said to be only sixteen years old when he was in the court of Jayachandra and therefore Malladeva could not have been born before 1154 AD if Vidyapati's story were true. In the face of the evidence that we have, we cannot push the date of Nanyadeva beyond 1150 AD. The contention held by Chakravarti that Malladeva died at the age of sixteen and accepted by R C Mazumdar[53] does not hold good as Vidyapati is silent about Malladeva's death. 1097 AD as the date of the foundation of Karnata kingdom by Nanyadeva is accepted by all authorities.[54] The error in reading the Nepal **Vamsavali** was due to the wrong reading of the first line of the so-called Simraon inscription. According to Jayaswal, the mistake arose due to reading the date from left to right as opposed to the accepted dictum right to left (**ankanam vamatogatih**).[55] Kirpatrick put the date at 901, Bhagwanlal at 811, and K C Pandey at the close of the tenth century AD. Dr K C Pandey in his learned work '**Abhinavagupta, an Historical and Philosophical Study**' (Benaras, 1935) has dwelt at length the date of Nanyadeva. As he raised certain problem, necessary extracts from the work is given here. Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Bharata's **Natyasastra** refers to Nanyadeva and quotes from his **Bharatabhasya** as follows: "**Uktam Nanyadevena sva Bharatabhasya**" (p.122). Pandey observes, "Nanyadeva finished his commentary on Bharata's **Natyasastra** before the close of the 10th century AD." (p.123). He further says, "It may be suggested here that if Gangadeva, the successor of Nanyadeva, be identical with Gangeyadeva, as Dr Mazumdar suggests, then the colophon of a book noticed by Mr Bandall, which refers to Tirhut being ruled over by Gangeyadeva and is dated Samvat 1076, puts Nanyadeva at a time which satisfactorily explains the fact of his having been quoted by Abhinava early in the 11th century AD." (p.125) He does not regard "Nanya's time" as "finally settled".

Here we have to bear that Pandey's suggestion about following the datum, put forward by Bendall, does not settle the difficulty as Bendall regards Gangeyadeva as a Kalachuri king and not a Karnata. There is no other Nanyadeva known to us as belonging to the Karnata dynasty and ruler of Mithila and as such we cannot accept the proposition of Dr Pandey in the present state of our knowledge. All literary, traditional and epigraphic evidence confirm that Nanya ascended the throne in 1097 and that he was the author of a Commentary on Bharata's **Natyasastra**.[56] According to Ramkrishnakavi, Nanyadeva closely follows Abhinavagupta ....and in two places Nanya mentions the great commentator by name. Abhinavagupta died in 1030 AD. The so-called mention of Nanyadeva in Abhinavagupta seems to be a later interpolation in the **MSS** and such interpolations are not very rare in ancient India. To me, it seems that there is no necessity of any further controversy with regard to the date of Nanyadeva which to a great extent stands settled. Since Nanyadeva was an authoritative commentator, his views might have attracted the interpolator to commit this intentional mistake of inserting Nanya's name in Abhinavagupta. The discovery of a new **MSS** of Abhinavagupta will only solve this problem. In so far as the Nepal **Vamsavalis** are concerned, but for a slight mistake for reading the first line, they correctly give us the date of the Karnata dynasty. The date of Harisimhadeva is correctly given at 1324/25 AD and total reign period of the Karnatas in the Nepal records correspond to the local and traditional sources.

The traditional sources do preserve an account of the flight of Harisimhadeva in Nepal, a fact substantiated by various other sources including a Persian **MSS**, **Basatinuluns** (now preserved in the British Museum). Photostat copy of the relevant pages of this **MSS** are now in my possession and



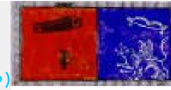
printed in my 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'. The **MSS** of a drama, **Muditakuvalavasya** (1628 AD), by Jagjyotirmalla, claiming to be a descendant of Harisimhadeva, records the date as follows – **Navendukha-chandraykute-Sake** – corresponding to July 18, 1097.[57] There is a difference of only eight days if we read it in the light of Simraon inscriptions, verified to have been a Saturday in the **Swati Naksatra**.[58] **Nanya's date, given in the traditional chronogram**, occurs in most of the Nepalese chronicles[59], but in its most correct form it is found only in the **VK** and in the **Muditakuvalavasya**. Inspite of the variants in most of the sources the accepted date for Nanyadeva is Saturday, July 18, 1097 AD.[60] Epithets used in Nanya's own commentary can be verified only if we take into consideration the contemporary political events. His own contemporaries are known to us from inscriptions. The Deopara inscription of Vijayasena helps us in ascertaining his date. He has been mentioned as Nanya in the Deopara inscription of Vijayasena and Andhratharhi inscription of Sridharadasa.[61] Thus on the basis of all the evidence, set forth above, we can say that to all intents and purposes the date of Nanyadeva should be taken as settled unless fresh material are not forthcoming. He ruled for about fifty years (1097-1147).[62]

CONQUESTS OF NANYADEVA (1097-1147)

At the beginning of his political carrier, Nanya seems to have been an ordinary feudatory chief and that is evident from his own commentary on Bharata's **Natyasastra**.[63] The available portion of the Commentary gives us the following details about the identity of Nanyadeva:

i. **Mahasamantadhipati, Dharmavaloka, Sriman Nanyapati.** Here we have to take note of the fact that in the Andhratharhi inscription of his minister Sridharadasa, he is called **Sriman** Nanyapati.[64] Sridharadasa seems to have been aware of his exact name or might have taken the same epithet from his commentary;
ii. **Mithilaswarena**;
iii. **Karnatakulabhusana**;
iv. **Rajanarayana**;
v. **Nrpa**;
vi. **Mohanamurari**;
vii. **Pratyagravanipati**;
viii. Extinguisher of the fame of Malwa;
ix. Conqueror of the heroes of Sauvira;
x. Breaker of the powers of Vanga and Gauda; and
xi. The Colophon of the **MSS**, **Bharatabhasya** by Nanyadeva (**MSS** No.111 of 1869/70 of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona) contains some important epithets of Nanya, such as: 'Nanyadevena, **Narapati**, **Maithilendra**, **Ksamapala-narayana**, **Sangramobhairavat**, etc.' Though the date of compilation is not recorded, the **MSS** appears to be very old.[65]

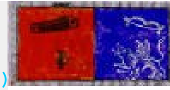
Mahasamantadhipati is indicative of the fact that he was a feudatory chief before he assumed the royal power in Mithila. Whether he was a **Samanta** under the Chalukya rulers or under the Palas, it is very difficult to say in the present state of our knowledge. It is not definitely known under whom he served, nor it is desirable to hazard a conjecture. It is apparent that he was such a powerful **Samanta** that he did



not care to mention the name of his master whosoever he may have been. His position seems to have been like a powerful Nawab of the later Mughal days who, though formerly under Delhi, did not even care to mention the master. He founded his capital at Simraongarh which is to be identified with Simaramapur of the **Krtyaratnakara**. Whatever might have been his position as a **Samanta**, there is no denying the fact that he succeeded in laying the foundation of an organised kingdom, thogh within the four corners of Tirhut, which was bound to play a considerable part in the history of north-eastern India. Even without making any interference in others' affairs and without dabbling into contemporary politics, he succeeded in maintaining the individuality of Mithila and confined his own ambitions to a limited scope. By following a policy of golden mean, he distinguished himself in peace and war. His important contemporaries were: i. Ramapala of the Pala dynasty, also Mahipala; ii. Vijayasena of the Sena dynasty; iii. Govindachandra Gahadawala of Kannauj; iv. Raghava of Kalinga;[66] and v. **Magadhadhipatih Pithipati**[67] is said to have fought against Nanyadeva.[68] Except the Palas, all the kingdoms were newly established and contemporaneous with the Karnatas of Mithila. Just a cursory glance over the map of the then north India would convince us of the fact that Nanya's kingdom was hemmed on all sides and its existence was always at stake. Nanya's diplomatic move was responsible for the safety of Mithila from any foreign attack. He does not seem to have been over-ambitious and he remained satisfied with what he had. In these days of power-seekers and adventurers, he kept himself diplomatically aloof and followed a policy of golden mean. Like Louis Philippe, Nanya failed to satisfy anybody by his policy of golden mean but it must be said to his credit that in spite of all the troubles that confronted him, he consolidated his kingdom to the best of his ability. We do not know of any of his successful conquests except one in Nepal.

We learn from the **Prakrita-paingalam** (**Bibliothica Indica Series**, Calcatta, 1902) that the Kalachuri king, Karna, after defeating the **Kasiraja**, conquered Champaran (p.296, Verse 4). The statement finds support in the Bheraghat inscription of Alhandevi. This epigraph says that Yasah Karna, having broken the Gahadawala barrier at Kasi, reached Champaran and devastated it.[69] Jayaswal suggested that the event took place during the time of Nanyadeva.[70] Whether Nanya was defeated or whether Champaran passed into the hands of the Chedis, we cannot definitely say. We learn from the Bheraghat inscription that though Yasah Karna succeeded in devastating Champaran, he could not possibly succeed in establishing his hold on the region. The event must have taken place before 1124 AD, the time by which the Chedis retreated from Benaras. In north Bihar, Yasah Karna had led two campaigns in Champaran.[71] The invasion of Champaran was like a raid and did not result in the permanent occupation of the territory. It seems that Nanya took a very serious view of the situation and shifted his capital from Nanpur, a village founded by him, to Simaraongarh in the Champaran district. The seat of administration was shifted to this place possibly after the Chedi expedition of Champaran. The local tradition also confirms that Nanyadeva shifted from Nanpur to Simaraon.[72] He fortified it in a remarkable manner and planned extraordinary fortifications.[73] Simaraongarh continued to be the capital of the Karnatas for a considerable period. It is believed that there was an inscription on the main entrance. The strategic importance of Simaraongarh was doubled after the Karnata victory in Nepal by Nanyadeva.

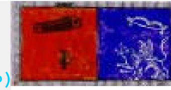
He is described as having defeated the heroes of Sauvira and Malwa. He is said to have broken the name and fame of these two contemporaries. It is likely that he might have defeated the kings of Malwa and



Sauvira, not as a ruler of Tirhut, but as a feudatory in early life.[74] We know practically little or nothing about his Malwa and Sauvira contemporaries except that Chalukya Vikramaditya VI conquered these territories in course of his campaigns. Nanya seems to have taken part in these campaigns and ultimately took upon himself the glory of these victories. It was in course of these campaigns that he possibly married a Gurjara lady.[75] The use of these epithets even when he was the **Mithileswarena** is indicative of the fact that he, with a view to “deluge the general mass ....put on the mantle of the hallow of imperial glory and dignity.”[76] R C Mazumdar has rightly pointed out that “it is impossible to believe that as a ruler of Mithila he could have carried his arms so far to the west.”[77]

Nanya further claims to have broken the powers of the Vangas and Gaudas. At the time of the establishment of the Karnata dynasty of Mithila, Bengal was passing through a period of crisis and every ambitious prince was trying to fish in the troubled waters of that province. The whole of eastern India was then in a process of political disintegration. The suppression of the Kaivarttas in Bengal by Ramapala was not attended with peace. East Bengal had came under the possession of the Varmans. The Senas had established themselves in Radha. Nanyadeva, after having successfully settled in Mithila, turned his attention towards Gauda, that is, north and east Bengal. In Gauda, Nanya probably came into conflict with Kumarapala and in Vanga with the Yadava ruler Harivarman.[78] Far more important than the southern raids of Bengal by the Cholas and the Chalukyas was the establishment of the two Karnata dynasties in Mithila and Bengal. Nanyadeva of Mithila proved to be a far more dangerous foe to Bengal. He came into conflict with Vijayasena either before or after his victory over Ramapala. He could not have established his kingdom in Mithila without coming into conflict with Ramapala and it was as a result of this conflict that he could make Mithila independent.[79] The boastings of Someswara III (1127-1138)[80], Vijjalla (1145-1167) and his son Soma about having conquered the kings of Nepal, Andhra, Dravida, Magadha and Kalinga[81] simply indicate that they took credit of what was done by the Karnata chiefs in these regions as they paid a nominal homage to their distant overlords. The reasons for conflict between the Senas of Bengal and the Karnatas of Mithila were obvious. Both of them coveted the same territory in Bengal and it appears that at first the two Karnata chiefs combined in their efforts in the beginning but fell out over the spoils which ultimately went to Vijayasena.

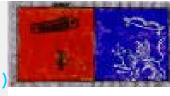
According to R C Mazumdar, Nanyadeva might have obtained some success at first both against the Palas and the Senas but was ultimately defeated by Vijayasena of Vanga and fell on his own dominion of Mithila.[82] He further believes that Vijayasena brought Mithila under his control but such an assumption is highly improbable in view of the fact that the very exactitude of the **La-Sam** is doubtful. There is no positive, either direct or indirect, evidence to suggest finally the Sena conquest of Mithila as a reality. It is true that the Deopara inscription refers to Nanya as defeated here.[83] Verses 20, 21 and 22 of the said epigraph may be interpreted to mean that Vijayasena first defeated the kings of Gauda, Kamrupa and Kalinga and then proceeded against Nanya and Vira. Verse 21 reproduces a conversation that is imagined by the poet to have taken place among them during their imprisonment, in course of which the futility of their aims was discussed. Ballalasena’s inscriptions do not refer to any campaign against Mithila. The expeditions referred to in the traditions may have been the same as was undertaken by his father. The question of Sena invasion of Mithila is yet an unsolved enigma in the history of north-eastern India. The Deopara inscription does not give us any definite information on this point except that it



refers to Nanya's defeat. Vijayasena is said to have led an expedition against west along the course of the Ganga, probably against Govindachandra of Kannauj. Most likely it was on this occasion that he invaded Mithila and inflicted a defeat on Nanyadeva.[84] H C Ray interpreting the relevant verses (22-24) of the Deopara inscription suggests that Vijayasena after crossing the river Nagar came into conflict with the chiefs of Mithila. It was possibly in course of this campaign that Bengal chief sent naval expedition against the western region[85], which "may not have been entirely unconnected with the Gahadawala."[86] The naval expedition was possibly an auxiliary to a land force. His fleet sailed westward beyond Rajmahal. Since Ganga is the dividing line between north and south, it is very difficult to say against whom this fleet was despatched and so also when there were three different rulers in Bihar, viz., Govindachandra, Madanapala and Nanyadeva. Since the Deopara inscription is not specific about the victorious achievements of his fleet in the west, it is natural to presume that Vijayasena's western expedition was not a fulsome success.

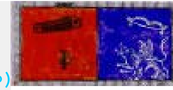
Mithila tradition asserts that Ballalasena at the instance of his father invaded Mithila and imprisoned Nanyadeva in the fort of Gandeswara (on the borders of Supaul and Darbhanga).[87] In recognition of his services Ballala was adorned with title of **Nisankha-Sankara**.[88] We further learn that Gangadeva, after freeing his father from the Sena detention, liberated the area and changed the name of Nishankhpur and named it Gangapur Rajni (after his own name) which is yet a village in Paragana Nishankhpurkurha in the district of Saharsa.[89] In the Madhainagar grant of Laksmanasena, Ballala is described as "**Ariraja-Nisankha-Sankara**". It was during his Mithila expedition that he seems to have displayed his military talents.[90] It is believed that Paragana Nisankhapurkurha in the Madhipura subdivision was the Sena administrative centre.[91] It is known from a literature of the later period that Ballala invaded Mithila during the reign of his father and that his kingdom comprised Vanga, Radha, Vagdi, Varendra and Mithila.[92] **Laghubharata**, a late work, states that Ballala received the news of Laksmana's birth when he was marching against Mithila. If there is any truth in the statement, Laksmana was obviously born after the death of Ramapala in 1120 AD, when alone Ballala could have led an expedition against Mithila. It was on the basis of his passage in the **Laghubharata** (Chapter 2, p.140) that Nagendranath Basu suggested that Ballala went on a conquest of Mithila. On the basis of **Ballalacharita**[93], it has been suggested that he led an expedition against Mithila and R C Mazumdar believes that the Sena rule over Mithila is indirectly supported by the obscurity in the history after Nanya (a point which now does not stand) and its association with **La-Sam**[94] era. In the same strain Mazumdar further observes, "Ballalasena's expedition against Mithila is supported in other traditions and historical facts"[95], but he does not give any example of these traditional facts. He contradicts himself again by saying that "it is very difficult to say how far these traditions correspond to real facts."[96]

Here we have to bear in mind that Ballalasena's inscriptions do not refer to any campaign against Mithila. The fact of Nanya's defeat and his consequent arrest by Vijayasena is proved by the Deopara inscription, the Mithila tradition and the evidence of Mulla Taquia. Other evidence are of a later date and cannot be thoroughly relied upon. In the present state of our knowledge, though we cannot reject outright the fact of Nanya's defeat and arrest, it is yet doubtful if Mithila was at any time under the control of the Senas. G M Sarkar asserted that "Vijayasena must have conquered north Bengal and Tirhut[97] by 1120." The Mithila tradition is insistent on the point that Gangadeva organised a powerful



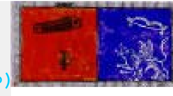
force and recovered the kingdom from the Senas. There is no question of any obscurity in the history of Mithila after Nanya as Dr R C Mazumdar would have us believe.[98] Even the Deopara inscription does not specifically imply any territorial expansion of Sena power in the region of Tirhut, even though a serious defeat seems to have been inflicted upon Nanya.[99] The most sober view, in this connection, is held by Dr D C Sircar who observes, “It is difficult to believe that Vijayasena had any appreciable success against Nanya whose successors were ruling over Mithila for a long time to come.”[100] The discovery of Sanokhar inscription of Ballalasena of 1166 AD establishes the fact that Ballalasena extended his authority up to Sanokhar region of Bhagalpur on the south of the Ganges. The existence of a strong Gahadawala power in the west stood in the way of Sena expansion. Sanokhar might have been the eastern limit of Sena power in Bihar. Possibly the Senas controlled a little portion of the area known as Morang, that is, north-eastern Purnea extending up to the borders of Jalpaiguri in Bengal. Veerabundh was the dividing line between the Senas of Bengal and the Karnatas of Mithila.[101] In verse 10 of the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena[102], we find Vijayasena’s wife causing gifts. The grant is made in Pundravardhanabhukti to Brahmana Udayakaradeva Sarman in honour of Maheswara bhattaraka.[103] Pundravardhanabhukti and Tirabhukti were co-terminus and a portion of Pundravardhanabhukti also lay in the district of Purnea in north Bihar. It was on the basis of the Sena occupation of Pundravardhanabhukti that the Sena possibly claimed Mithila as one of their provinces. The concept of Mithila being one of the five provinces of the Sena kingdom is erroneously based on this view. It is not possible for us to agree with the view that Ballala’s kingdom extended up to Mithila in the west (**DHNI** – I.364) in the present state of our knowledge. As soon as the sceptre of the Gahadawala power was withdrawn, the Senas are said to have planted their “pillars of victories” at Benaras and Prayag. All these go to show that Nanya maintained himself successfully against the onslaught of the Senas and continued to rule as an independent king of Tirhut and his dynasty ruled for a much longer period than the Senas.

Jayaswal held that Nanyadeva was friendly to the Gahadawalas. According to the learned scholar, the Palas, the Karnatas and the Gahadawalas joined in a confederacy against the rising power of the Senas.[104] Jayaswal here closely follows R D Banerji.[105] Jayaswal further suggested that since **Kalpataru**, written by the foreign minister of Govindachandra, became the ruling authority in Mithila under the Karnata dynasty and that Malladeva served under Jayachandra, Mithila was friendly with the Gahadawalas. Another point suggested in this connection is the expansion of Govindachandra Gahadawala up to Munger and their consequent struggle with the Senas.[106] It is true that Munger passed into the hands of the Gahadawalas[107] and by that time, the whole of Bengal seems to have been lost to the Senas. Madanapala possibly held only a negligible portion of south Bihar and he had temporary success over the Gahadawalas.[108] Krmila Visaya between Munger and Patna was under the Palas.[109] The **Prakritpainglam** suggests that the king of Kasi fought successfully with the kings of Gauda, Vanga, Kalinga, Telanga, Maharastra, Saurastra, Champaran, Nepal, Bhota, China and Lohavara.[110] This literary evidence gives an indication of the fact that the Gahadawalas were not on good terms with the contemporaries in Vanga, Gauda, Champaran and Nepal, that is, the Senas, Palas and the Karnatas. Viewed in this background, it can be suggested that the king of west against whom Vijayasena advanced through the upper course of the Ganga was in all probability Govindachandra.



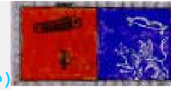
If Nanyadeva really invaded Malwa, he must have to force his way through the territory of Govindachandra. Though we are not sure about htis event, it is not unlikely that Govindachandra not only fought with the kings of Gauda, Muslims of Lahore, Chalukya Someswara III but also came into conflict with Vijayasena, Anantavarmana of Kalinga, Nanyadeva of Mithila, and Parmaras of Malwa.[111] There is no evidence in support of an alliance between Gahadawalas and the Karnatas. Nanyadeva of Mithila was the immediate neighbour of the Gahadawalas and there might have been a clash between the two. Govindachandra possibly came into conflict with the Palas, the Senas, the Gangas, the Kakatiyas, Chalukyas, Chandellas, and the Karnatas of Mithila.[112] The Gahadawal invasion of Champaran is an important point to be reckoned with and that might have come in the wake of the Kalachuri invasion of the same area. We learn from the Kahla inscription of Sodhadeva, dated VS 1135/1079 AD, that as early as 1079 AD Sodhadeva had declared himself independent in the Gorakhpur region and had extended his territory up to Saran in north Bihar.[113] We further learn from a Lucknow Museum plate of Kirttipaldeva, dated VS 1167-1111 AD, that the north-eastern portion of Gorakhpur (bordering on Motihari in north Bihar) lay outside the Gahadawal dominion till that date. The inscription refers the grant of two villages in the **Darada-Gandaki-Desa**[114] by Kirttipala. This land possibly lay contiguous to a dart or a mountain and the Gandaki.[115] On the north east probably the river greater Gandak was the boundary of the Gahadawalas and after that area began the Karnata territory of Mithila.[116] In face of all these arguments, referred to above, it is not possible to accept the contention of Jayaswal that Nanyadeva and his Gahadawal contemporary were friends. There is no proof of any alliance between the two dynasties.[117] Even Mithila tradition does not show any sign of Nanya's contact with the Gahadawalas. Had Nanyadeva maintained the balance of power between the Senas and the Gahadawalas, he could also have embarked on an aggressive policy. Viewed in the light of contemporary political condition it would be more appropriate to suggest that Nanya was satisfied with his own fortunes[118] in Tirhut and he sought his compensation in the valleys of Nepal.

Mithila and Nepal have been intimately connected since time immemorial. Mithila lay on the route to Nepal. The decline of the Pala authority was followed by a period of which we have no definite information. We have seen that Vikramaditya VI claimed to have placed his foot upon the heads of the kings of Andhra, Dravida and Nepal.[119] The Pattadakal inscription of 1162 mentions Nepal among the vassals of Chalukya emperor Someswara III.[120] All these are indicative of the fact that all was not well with Nepal which was passing through a very critical stage of her history. Within Nepal, there was some sort of disturbances between the Thakuris of Nayakota and Patan. The disturbances leading to the restoration of the Thakuris of Nayakota originated in Tirhut, where the Karnatas had already established their power.[121] The absence of full royal titles in case of Harsadeva (1082-1098) is indicative of the fact that he did not assume such titles and on his death there appears to have ensued some trouble in Nepal. The later **Vamsavalis** held that Nanyadeva entered Nepal, introduced the Saka era and established his court at Bhatagaon. From there he ruled over Patan and Khatmandu.[122] Petech, the latest writer on Nepal, who refuses to acknowledge Nanyadeva as a king of Nepal, has been forced to admit that "apparently he (Nanya) did raid Nepal after the death of Harsadeva, and this was not forgotten. ...."[123] The colophon of a **MSS** of 1099 AD suggests that Ramadeva of Dhavalasrota was a **Mahasamantadhipati** in Nepal, and he possibly claimed independence in the time of Harsadeva. This Ramadeva might have acknowledged the sway of Ramapaladeva of the Pala dynasty, prior to the rise of Nanyadeva, as is



evident from the colophon of a **MSS** of **Kubjikamata**[124] **(Ramadevasya – Parameswara Paramabhattaraka Paramasaugata Maharaja Srimadrampaladevasya)**. In the present state of our knowledge that we have on Nepal, it is not possible to agree with Petech that Ramadeva accepted "the overlordship of Ramapala, perhaps as insurance against any threat from Nanyadeva"[125] as the colophon does not give any such indication. Nanya's rise in Mithila sounded the death-knell of the Pala empire and the Pala dynasty in Nepal was replaced by the Karnatas. Ramadeva, after the fall of Palas, might have transferred his loyalty to Nanya as his Mahasamantadhipati. Ramadeva might have been Nanya's Samanta against Sivadeva (1098-1126). Petech is rightly suspicious about the tenability of his own findings. Ramapala's rule, prior to Nanyadeva, is further proved by a hitherto unnoticed **MSS** of the **Aryesnisavijayanamadharni**, brought to light by Petech (p.53).

Taking advantage of the chaotic situation in Nepal the Karnatas had entered the valley during the time of Nanyadeva. Nanya captured the whole of the country, dethroned the ruling princes and established his court at Bhatagaon. If the Nepalese tradition is to be relied upon, Nanya captured two Nepalese princes, Jayadevamalla of Patan and Khatmandu, and Anandamalla of Bhatagaon. According to Levi, the chroniclers have fallen into a blunder by introducing Malla kings into Nepal at this period.[126] The Mallas of Nepal traced their descent to Nanyadeva.[127] The other view is that Nanya did not destroy the local princes in the Nepal valley who continued to rule under him. Thus it seems plausible to suggest that the vacuum created in Nepal after the fall of the Palas was filled in by the Karnatas. Bendall has not mentioned Nanyadeva, while Wright and Bhagwanlal put him to a later date.[128] There is absolutely no ground for any doubt that Nanya made himself the master of the entire valley. Wright refers to a conflict between the Mallas of Nepal and Nanya. According to Levi, the Mallas existed in Nepal between 700 and 1200 AD.[129] We learn from the **Vamsavali** records that Nanya defeated the Mallas and forced them to flee to Tirhut. Petech believes that there was no Malla king in the valley in that period as the Malla dynasty was founded by Arimalladeva[130] in 1200 AD. Nanya did not have a peaceful time in Nepal as he had to face the opposition of the Thakuri prince, Sivadeva, who had adopted a high-sounding title "**Rajadhiraja Parameswara**". The circumstances through which Sivadeva came to the throne are obscure. The kingdom was in turmoil on account of internal feuds between the Thakuris of Nayakot and Thakuris of Patan. The revival of the Thakuris of Nayakot was made possible by the invasion of Nanyadeva which put an end to the power of the Patan family.[131] Nanya's invasion of Nepal took place in 1119-20 and even after the local ruling princes continued to assume imperial titles[132] in spite of their subservient position. On the evidence of the titles adopted by Sivadeva, it has been held that Nanyadeva could not certainly keep the conquered country under his control for a long time.[133] Sivadeva was ruling between 1118 and 1123 and it appears that the Thakuris of Nayakot again came to power under him. It has been suggested that Nanyadeva in the beginning espoused the cause of Sivadeva and influenced his power in the valley.[134] Being pressed on all sides in Tirhut, it was natural for Nanya to turn his attention towards Nepal. The Thakuris, for some time, had asserted their independence possibly during the period when Nanya was busy consolidating his gains in Tirhut. Sivadeva was followed by Indra or Mahendra in 1128 and he was followed by Manadeva in 1134. If Regmi's contention be accepted, Nanya occupied the valley[135] in 1141 AD. It has been suggested that the internal difficulties of Tirhut between 1118 and 1141 called for the immediate attention of Nanyadeva and hence probably a reconquest of the valley was made necessary in 1141 AD and since then his rule over Nepal continued unabated.[136] The apparent



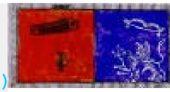
nature of his sovereignty in Nepal is not clear. The internal disruption of Nepal was responsible for the ultimate success of Nanyadeva.

ESTIMATE OF NANYADEVA

Nanyadeva ruled for about fifty years from 1097 to 1147. He was not only the founder of the Karnata dynasty but also one of its greatest kings. The Andhratharhi inscription, though undated, is the only epigraphic record of Nanyadeva in the heart of Mithila. From that epigraph, we learn that Nanya was treated by his contemporary as a ksatriya. In the Mithila tradition[137], he has been described as a Paramara (Karnata) ksatriya of southern origin. He is also described as the 'lord', 'victor' and besides 'his extraordinary achievements', he is said 'to have turned the world into a second **Ksirasagara**' by his fame.[138] Nanya, whose origin is yet enveloped in obscurity, succeeded in carving out an independent state practically out of dust, must be reckoned as one of the greatest personalities and political figures of north-eastern India. With all his limitations, political or otherwise, his achievements were not below the mark if we take into account the political storm of contemporary India. The kingdom, created by the genius of Nanyadeva, lasted for a longer period and survived almost all the contemporary dynasties. This was no mean achievement for Nanyadeva who had very little military success in his life after his accession to the throne of Mithila. We learn from his **Commentary**, that he married a Gurjara lady.[139] Nanya had a brother named Kirttiraja who was also called a Nrpati. Whether Kirttiraja ruled in Tirhut or elsewhere, we do not definitely know. Nanya not only conquered and created a state but also consolidated it and left a good heritage for his successors. Besides being a good wrrior and diplomat, he patronised art, literature and culture and was himself one of the greatest scholars of the time. He wrote his famous commentary on Bharata's **Natyasastra**, which came to be regarded as the most standard work on the subject. It was under the able leadership of Nanyadeva that Mithila once again came to the forefront of Indian history both in the areas of politics and culture after a long gap of about fifteen hundred years.

MALLADEVA AND GANGADEVA

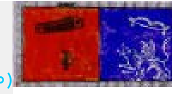
(a) Malladeva – Nanyadeva had two sons, Malladeva and Gangadeva. I consider Malladeva to be a forgotten king of Mithila.[140] On the basis of the Bheet-Bhagawanpur inscription, which reads "**Om Sri Malladevasya ....**", it has been suggested that Bheet-Bhagawanpur was the capital of Malladeva. The Gandhvariya Rajputs of Tirhut trace their descent from Malladeva. The ruins at Bhagawanpur, still unnoticed, are in keeping with the Karnata tradition of black stone and they belong to the 12th century AD. Even the script of the inscription bears close resemblance to the palaeography of the same century. Vidyapati asserts that Malladeva was a valiant warrior.[141] He went to the king of Kannauj, Jayachandra; but due to his quarrelsome nature he could not stay there very long. He left Kannauj and went to the Chikkor king. The Chikkors belonged to the kingdom of Pithi[142], and at one time played a very important part in the history of north-eastern India. Pithi was an important kingdom.[143] The Gahadawalas had friendly relations with the Chikkors of Pithi and the Chikkor princess Kumaradevi was the wife of Govindachandra. According to Vidyapati, the Chikkor kingdom had not the means to measure arms with so mighty a monarch as Jayachandra of Kasi. Malladeva was the cause of struggle between the Chikkors and the Gahadawalas. Jayachandra called Malladeva a supreme scion of the Karnata race. Malladeva



was known as "**Pratimalla**" or antagonist. Vidyapati calls him heir-apparent, valorous and praises his independent attitude of mind.[144] Since he was a man of independent nature he left his kingdom to eke out his existence elsewhere. After Nanya's death he seems to have become the ruler of Tirhut as will be evident from the following facts.

Tradition asserts that one of Nanya's sons ruled in Nepal.[145] It seems that Gangadeva ruled in Mithila while the other, who is none else than Malladeva, ruled in Nepal. Narasimhadeva had some differences with his kinsmen in Nepal, the upshot of which was that Mithila and Nepal were separated. The possibility of the division of Nanya's kingdom cannot be ruled out or rejected outright. It is likely that Gangadeva ruled over certain portion of Mithila and from there he extended his authority up to Bengal, while Malladeva ruled over the north-eastern portion of Mithila and the Terai area of Nepal. Malladeva kept his headquarters at Bheet-Bhagawanpur, where his inscription can yet be seen. He was not on good terms with his brother, Gangadeva.[146] Another proof of Malladeva's kingship is in the assertion of a local tradition that one Vardhaman Upadhyaya was patronised by Malladeva. Vardhamana, the distinguished writer on Smriti, flourished between 1150 and 1250[147] and has referred to a **Karnata-lalana** in his writings. Popular tradition is supported by certain village names in Tirhut still commemorating the name of Malladeva. Maldiha on the borders of Purnea and Saharsa districts and Malhad in the Supaul sub-division are said to have been founded by Malladeva and vast ruins of these villages were washed by the Kosi in the thirties-forties of the present century. In the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to say anything certain only on the basis of a solitary epigraphic evidence.[148] Further archaeological excavations may throw some welcome light on the authenticity of Malladeva as a ruler of Mithila.

(b) Gangadeva (1147-1188) – From Pratapamalla's inscription of Nepal we learn that Gangadeva succeeded Nanyadeva in 1147. He was a very brave king. He took revenge against the Palas and the Senas. He was a contemporary of Madanapala and probably attacked his kingdom with success.[149] The internal disruptions and the foreign invasions led to the collapse of the Pala kingdom. From the Manhali copper plate, it appears that at least a considerable portion of north Bengal was under Madanapala up to the eighth year of his reign. The Jayanagar inscription shows that in the fourteenth year of his reign, he ruled over the southern part of the district of Munger and this is further supported by the Valgudar inscription of Madanapala according to which he ruled up to 1161 AD. The **Ramacharita** (iv.27) of Sandhyakara Nandi refers to an invasion of Gauda by the Karnata ruler of Mithila. Nanyadeva claimed to have broken the powers of Vanga and Gauda and Gangadeva too claimed some political authority in Gauda. He was almost certainly a contemporary of Madanapala and attacked his kingdom in north Bengal with some success. He has been rightly called **Gaudadhwaja** in the colophon of a **Ramayana MSS** (**Supra**). After the death of Madanapala, the Pala rulers had ceased to exercise any suzerainty in western, eastern and southern Bengal and northern Bihar. In the Sena dynasty, Ballalasena was a contemporary of Gangadeva. It is believed that the Sena kingdom did not lose any of its province during the reign of Ballala but as far as we know from various sources, with the possible exception of **Ballalacharita**, Ballalasena did not lead any independent expedition against Mithila during his own rule. There is no positive evidence to show that Ballala came into conflict with Gangadeva. The village



Gangapur Rajni in the sub-division of Madhipura still reminds us of the rule of Gangadeva in that region. He is said to have defeated the Senas during the rule of his father and to have pushed them eastward.

If there was any Sena hold over Mithila, it must have been confined up to the Morang region. The mention of Mithila in the Sena literary records should mean simply Morang and nothing else. The concept of **Panch-Gauda** is old one, and all rulers of Bengal continued to adore themselves with this epithet simply to make their prestige felt over others. The literary evidences are of a later date and hence cannot be regarded as the sole authoritative historical evidence. The contemporary political situation was also not in favour of Ballalasena's unplanned adventure in the game of power politics. The Gahadawalas under Govindachandra had advanced up to Munger and their retirement was immediately followed by the re-establishment of the Pala authority under Madanapala as is evident from the Valgudar inscription of the same king. These difficulties did not afford any opportunity to Ballala for imperialistic expansion in or against Mithila, rather he had to safeguard his own position against the rising enemies.

It is not possible to agree with Thakur's assertion that 'Gangadeva's suzerainty over Nepal was just a loose sort of sovereignty ....he exacted tributes and often influenced the political sctivities thereof'.[150] We have shown that Malladeva was ruling over the terai area and eastern portion of Tirhut while Gangadeva was ruling in Tirhut. Anantadeva (1146-1166), Rudradeva, Mitradeva (Wright) or Amitadeva (Bendall) were the contemporary rulers of Nepal during the time of Gangadeva. The history of Nepal was then in a process of political disintegration as is clear from the Pattadakal inscription of 1162 which mentions Nepal as a vassal of the Chalukya emperor Someswara III. In an inscription of 1200 AD Kalachuri Bijjalla is praised for having destroyed the stability of Nepal.[151] The Mangalai inscription represents Yadava Jaitungi as having defeated the leaders of the armies of Nepal. In view of these facts, and the discovery of five **MSS**[152] representing the restoration of the Thakuri line, it appears that the authorities of the Karnatas had been reduced to non-entity and the Thakuris had asserted their independence. The division of the Karnata line in Mithila had enabled Nepal to assert its independence in the time of Gangadeva though Malladeva could succeed in keeping his control over a portion of Nepal in the Terai area. Malladeva ruled over such territory of Nepal as lay contiguous to the eastern portion of Tirhut. The Mallas had also established their power before and after Nanyadeva and Levi considers the existence of such a dynasty as not wholly impossible.[153]

The Andhratharhi inscription also mentions Gangadeva but there is nothing positive to throw light on his reign period. Sridharadasa seems to have continued as minister under Gangadeva. Unlike his father, his reign was comparatively peaceful. The Senas were kept at bay on account of the advance of the Gahadawalas, who were also face to face with Muslim invaders. Thus when all the contemporary powers seem to have been faced with internal and external trouble, Mithila remained peaceful under Gangadeva, who set himself to the task of introducing certain administrative reforms in his kingdom. By introducing these reforms, he consolidated the gains of the Karnata dominion. He is said to have introduced the system of Parganas or fiscal divisions for the purpose of revenue administration. For the collection of revenue, a Choudhary or Headman was appointed for each Pargana. For the settlement of all types of dispute, he created a **Panchayata**[154] on the basis of election. He got dug many tanks and created a large number of temples. Three such tanks bearing his name are yet extant.[155] According to a

tradition he built a strong fort at Andhratharhi.[156] It has been pointed out by Mulla Taquia that Gangadeva shifted his capital to Darbhanga.[157] Simraongarh continued to be the main capital but several other towns were converted into temporary capitals and Darbhanga was one of them. While Nanyadeva conquered and consolidated, it was left to Gangadeva to stabilise the newly established kingdom on sound lines.

NARASIMHADEVA (1188-1227)

Narasimhadeva succeeded his father Gangadeva in 1188. Various scholars have confused this Narasimha with Narasimhadeva of Ramadatta's **Danapaddhati**. Ramadatta was the son of Ganeswara, the author of **Sugatisopana**. Nrsimhadeva of **Danapaddhati MSS** should be distinguished from Narasimhadeva, the third ruler of the Karnata dynasty. In the **Danapaddhati**, Nrsimha is called **Srimana** and he seems to have been a ruler of the dynasty after the fall of Harasimhadeva.[158] That he belonged to the Karnata dynasty is evident from the epithet '**Karnatavyabhusana**' (crest-jewel of the Karnatas). Manmohan Chakravarti's observations on this point approach the truth. It was possibly after Harasimha's departure that Nrsimha, who should be designated as Nrsimha II, established his authority over a limited area. Thakur has confused the issue with regard to this king and other kings of the Karnata dynasty in so far as the question of chronological sequence is concerned. Ramadatta was the minister of Nrsimha II and as such he could not have been the minister of the third ruler of the Karnata dynasty. Ramadatta was a contemporary of Chandeswara and as such it is impossible to place him along with Narasimhadeva.

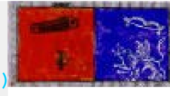
We get some information about this king from Vidyapati's **Purusapariksa**. In tale 4, we are told that Delhi Sultan in his march against the enemy was helped by the two young princes – Narasimhadeva of the Karnata race and Chachikadeva Chauhana. Grierson identified this Sultan with Mohammad bin Tughlaq.[159] Grierson admits that Narasimhadeva was the grandson of Nanyadeva. How can a grandson of Nanyadeva be contemporaneous with Mohammad bin Tughlaq? M Chakravarti has also followed Grierson and later writers have simply dittoed him.[160] Thakur has confused the issue and has been swayed more by semi-patriotic considerations than by historical reasoning. In reply to his confusion it can be pointed out that the Muslim expansion was not the moot question there. The service of Narasimhadeva under Delhi may be a friendly gesture of goodwill and not a sign of surveillance.[161] Muhammad of the Purusapariksa is to be identified with Shihabuddin Mohammad Ghori because this finds support in Mithila tradition that Narasimhadeva used to go to Kannauj with his uncle Malladeva. At the end of Jayachandra's rule, he went to Delhi and fought for Shihabuddin Mohammad Ghori.[162] Chronologically too Narasimha was a close contemporary of Shihabuddin and not of Muhammad Tughlaq as suggested by Grierson and Chakravarti.[163] In this case we cannot reject Vidyapati's authority outright. Here we have to take note of the fact that Vidyapati has given us the history of the Karnatas in five tales and in doing so he has kept in view the chronological order. At least this much of accuracy about chronology is expected of a scholar of his repute, whose ancestors had served in various capacities under the Karnatas and about whose exploits our poet must have been aware. There can be no hesitation in identifying Mohammad Ghori as the king of Hastinapur (Delhi). After defeating Prthviraja, Shihabuddin became the master of Delhi, which fell in 1193 AD. Chachikadeva was a brother of Prthviraja.[164] Naturally he was also a contemporary of Shihabuddin and might have joined the camp after the defeat of his brother.[165]

If Mulla Taquia is to be relied upon, Narasimha had been reduced to a subservient position under Laksmanasena of Bengal. The position of the Karnata kingdom under Narasimha had become very insecure as it was sandwiched between the two powerful kingdoms of Oudh and Lakhnawati.[166] He seems to have paid direct or indirect tribute to some Muslim masters but by following the policy of **Vetasivritti**, he succeeded in maintaining the independence of Mithila, though its size seems to have been reduced to a great extent. Possibly a portion of Purnea went out of his orbit. His kingdom was no better than a supple cane bending under pressure and becoming straight again.[167]

In Nepal, Narasimha had quarrel with his kinsman the upshot of which was that Mithila and Nepal were separated.[168] This fact has not yet been verified on the basis of any sound evidence. Between 1187 and 1227, we find the names of the following rulers of Nepal – Gunakamadeva II (1187), Laksmikamadeva (1193), Vijayakamadeva (1196-97), Arimalladeva, founder of the Malla dynasty, Ranasura (1221) and Abhayamalla (1223-1252). It is doubtful if these rulers accepted the suzerainty of the Karnatas of Mithila. Malla dynasty does not seem to have been very powerful by that time in Nepal. We learn from the Nilgriva pillar inscription, that Dharmamalla and Rupamalla were ancestors of the Mallas of Nepal.[169] Arimalladeva was the most important ruler of this dynasty (1201-1216) and he was a contemporary of Narasimha of Mithila.[170] Whether the Mallas were connected with Nanyadeva or not, is a very doubtful question and hence in the present state of our knowledge, we can say that Nepal under the Mallas, specially Arimalladeva, broke connections with Tirhut. Had that not been the case, there was no necessity of embarking on fresh conquests by the great minister of Harasimhadeva, Chandeswara. Chandeswara's boast about Nepal's conquest is an ample proof of the fact that Nepal had freed herself from the control of Karnatas. Some areas of the Terai were possibly under the control of the descendants of Malladeva who were ruling separately from the main branch.

No remarkable event of any historical importance took place during the reign of Narasimhadeva. Though in tradition and folk-tales, he has been described as a brave and powerful king, the evidence and the results thereof at our disposal enable us to conjecture that he was a mediocre in politics. He had to face a sea of troubles on all sides and it must be said to his credit that he maintained the independence of Mithila though in a somewhat truncated form, from the onslaughts of the Muslims either by seeking friendship with them or by submitting to them and promising to pay them taxes. The texture of the political set up had by then certainly changed and circumstances might have turned him into a 'weak king' as Jayaswal thinks. Like his ancestors, he maintained the cultural tradition of his family. He got dug a number of tanks and also built a large number of temples. Two of his ministers Ramaditya and Karmaditya are known to us. They held different portfolios and acted as advisors. Karmaditya is known to us from the Tilkeswara temple inscription (also known as Havidih inscription[171]). The inscription records the erection of an image of Haihhattadevi at the instance of queen Saubhagyadevi. The writers of Sanskrit were encouraged by the state and it seems that the Maithili language had come to stay by the time of Narasimhadeva. The mention of Lorika ballad in the **Varnanaratnakara** of Jyotiriswara is an indication in that respect. The script of the inscription, referred to above, is Maithili.[172]

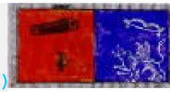
RAMASIMHADEVA (1227-1285)



Narasimhadeva was succeeded by his son Ramasimhadeva in 1227 AD. We learn from a Nepal **Vamsavali** that Ramasimha was born on the 8th of March, 1188.[173] Like Narasimha, M Chakravarti has confused Ramasimha with another king of that name of the Karnata dynasty and Bendall has further confused by identifying this king with Ramabhadra of the Oinwara dynasty.[174] One Ramasimhadeva is mentioned in the colophon of a **MSS** of the **Sudhikalpataru** and is said to have flourished in the **Samvat** 1446 (1390 AD). In this colophon he is called **Mahanrpati**. This gives rise to confusion about the date of Ramasimhadeva. In the **Nepal Darbar Catalogue** (p.23), he is called **Maharajadhiraja, Bhupala, Mithiladhipati** and in the Mithila tradition, he is called **Bhujabalabhima** and **Bhimaparakrama** whereas in the **Sudhikalpataru**[175] he is simply called **Mahanrpati**. Scholars have rightly accepted this Ramasimhadeva of the **Sudhikalpataru**[176] as a Karnata king of Mithila but they have committed an error in so far as his chronology is concerned. So far as the date of Ramasimha is concerned, it now stands well attested by the testimony of the Tibetan traveller, Dharmaswami. On the basis of Nepalese and Mithila tradition, Ramasimha flourished between 1229 and 1291, though M Chakravarti placed him two steps below Harasimhadeva.

In the two inscriptions of Pratapamalla of Nepal of 1648 and 1658 AD respectively and in the **Vamsavali**, Ramasimha has been shown as son and successor of Narasimha and a predecessor of Harasimha. The confusion, created by Chakravarti, was followed by all later writers without any doubt whatsoever. A study of all the contemporary sources reveals to us that Ramasimhadeva of the **Sudhikalpataru** was a local ruling chieftain.[177] There is no doubt that Ramasimha was fourth in descent from Nanyadeva. It is not a fact that his exact chronological position is 'uncertain due to conflicting evidences regarding his place in the family genealogy'.[178] The **MSS** of the **Sudhikalpataru** does not definitely solve the problem of his chronology. By no stretch of imagination can we change the chronological order of the Karnata kings of Mithila in the present state of our knowledge. Ramasimha is called **Mithilamahendra** and **Mithiladhipati** respectively by Srikara and Prthvidhara. The **MSS** of the **Anargharaghava** of Murari written by a Mithila author, son of Vardhamana, was commented upon by one Chitrakara Sukla who flourished under king Ramasimhadeva, son of Narasimhadeva.[179] Ramasimhadeva is described here as having defeated the Turuska king. Due to copyist's make there has been a slight mistake in the pronounciation of his name, but this piece of information is important in establishing the fact that he was the son of Narasimhadeva and as such he cannot be placed after Harasimha. His date now should be taken as finally settled on the basis of the evidence furnished by the Tibetan traveller, Chang-lo-tsa-ba-chos-rja-dpal (Dharmaswami), who was in India between 1234 and 1236 and met Ramasimha of Tirhut at his capital Simraongarh. According to Dharmaswami, Ramasimha had ascended the throne seven years earlier[180], **that is**, in 1227 AD. In order to face bravely the apprehended Muslim attack, he had thoroughly strengthened his fortification. Thakur suggests that Ramasimha ascended the throne and after 'a reign of 58 years breathed his last in 1276' (**TM** – 266). It is strange that he failed to see his own discrepancies because even a simple arithmetical calculation would bring the total of Ramasimha's reign to 1283 AD. Thakur has not indicated any source of his authority. So far as the date of his accession is concerned, it should be now treated as finally settled.

Petech holds that both Narasimha and Ramasimha maintained some connection with Nepal because their names appear in the early **Vamsavalis**.[181] The **VT** relates how Ramasimha was dethroned by



Mukundasena, a king of Palpa in Western Nepal, who invaded and looted the valley, but incurred thereby the wrath of Lord Pasupati[182], his army was destroyed by a pestilence and he himself died on the flight. D W Wright gives the same story but the event is referred back to the time of Harideva which is chronologically impossible.[183] Though there are three eras in the **VT**, Petech has rightly taken note of the Samvat 1167 and has referred it to the Saka era, equivalent to 1245 AD on the ground that **Vikrama** era was not then employed in Nepal and Tirhut. 1245 AD agrees quite well with the date of Ramasimhadeva.[184] Petech has hazarded a conjecture that Ramasimha's reign ended in 1245 AD. There is no hesitation in accepting the truth that possibly disturbed the political condition of Mithila. Mukundasena's invasion was in the shape of a raid as any permanent occupation is not indicated therein. Abhayamalla was then ruling in Nepal. It must be conceded that Mukundasena was no more than a political adventurer of western Nepal and taking advantage of the weakness of king of Mithila, he wanted to fish in the troubled water of Tirhut in which he had practically little success. Nepal was then passing through a serious famine as registered by the contemporary chronicles and Ramasimha was hard-pressed by the Muslims. Mukundasena, therefore, seems to have embarked on a conquest of these regions. The strengthening of the fortifications of Simaraon had possibly to do something with protracted invasion not only from the Muslims but also from western Nepal. Ramasimha is further mentioned in the history of Nepal in an obscure context concerning the foundation and religious ceremonies and has been called Appu Ramasimha and the date given therein is 364 **Jyestha Krsna Pratipada**, equivalent to May 24, 1244 AD.[185]

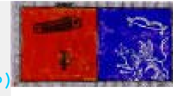
Ramasimha was a pious devotee and a firm patron of sacred literature. He was very successful king and he effectually organised the administrative system on sound and efficient lines. He made several social changes and for the guidance of the Hindus certain fundamental rules were passed. He set forth certain moral rules for the people of the land and an officer was appointed in each village 'to adjudicate upon all questions arising from working of the new canons of conduct.'[186] A police officer was appointed in evry village. He was required to make a daily report of all the occurrences to the **Choudhary**, the head revenue collector of the **Paragana**. These officers were paid in lands and not in cash. The Karnata period of Mithila's history, specially under Gangadeva and Ramasimhadeva, saw the stabilisation of feudal **jagirs** conferred upon various officers. The system of **Patawari**, in Mithila, is attributed to this king. He also laid out big tanks and got constructed a large number of temples in the vicinity of Mithila. His reign witnessed a huge literary output in the domain of literature and philosophy. I have not come across any instance where this scholar king has been quoted as Thakur thinks (**TM** – 274). Nowhere in the domain of the sacred literature of Mithila has this king been quoted though he might have contributed largely to various branches of knowledge. References about him are there in the Sanskrit literature. His **Sadasya** wrote a commentary on the lexicon **Amarakosatika** (**Vyakhyamrta**). His name was Srikara. Other scholars who adorned his court were Prthvidhara, Ratneswara, Chatraddhara and a host of others. Commentaries and learned treatises were written in large numbers in his reign. For administrative purposes there were ministers who advised the king on important matters. Ramaditya and Karmaditya held two different portfolios during the reign of his father. They also served as his advisors. We have the name of Karmaditya serving as a minister under Ramasimhadeva from the **Havidiha inscription**. Ramasimha seems to have maintained the independence of Mithila.

Mithila continued to be the resort of almost all the Sanskrit scholars of north India. Though politically not very important, the reign of Ramasimha forms a landmark in the cultural history of Mithila. Though he was a strong believer in Hindu social orthodoxy, Ramasimha was no zealot. Dharmaswami, the Tibetan Buddhist traveller, was received and treated with the courtesy and honour by Ramasimha who offered the pilgrim the post of the palace priest. From Dharmaswami we learn that the Hindus and Buddhists were not at daggers drawn but their relationship was cordial. The greatest example of this fact is Ramasimha himself, who, though a devout Hindu, offered the post of his Royal Chaplain to a Buddhist (**that is**, Dharmaswami). While the Hindu aristocracy helped the Buddhist monasteries, the Buddhists also used to visit the temples of Siva and Kali. The spirit of tolerance had not even then disappeared altogether. Dharmaswami has also referred to the existence of a large number of **Tantric** cults in the heart of Tirhut. According to this traveller, Vaisali was practically deserted. Dharmaswami gives the following description of the town of **Pa-ta** (identified with Simaraongarh, the capital of the Karnatas). **Pa-ta** had six lac houses and it was surrounded by seven walls. The Raja's palace stood outside the town walls. The palace had eleven large gates and was surrounded by twelve ditches full of water and rows of trees. The protective measures were due to the fear of the **Turuskas** who during the year led an army against the town but had failed to reach it. Dharmaswami met the Raja and greeted him in Sanskrit **sloka**. The Raja was kind enough to request him to become his chaplain.

It is believed that Tughan Khan conquered and captured the Karnata kingdom and imprisoned the king. It is further suggested that in lieu of his brave services, the Karnata king was later on released and respectively sent to Darbhanga as a king.[187] The contention cannot hold good as we have an eye-witness account in the person of Dharmaswami who bears testimony to the fact that the **Turuskas** failed to reach the Karnata capital.[188] In addition to this evidence, we have another indigenous source in the shape of a commentator of the **Anargharaghavatika**, referred to above, who also suggests that Ramasimha was victorious over his Muslim authority. Hussamuddin Iwaz is said to have exacted tribute from Tithut. In so far as the safety of north Bihar was concerned, it fell upon Ramasimha's shoulder to protect the independence of Mithila in his own way. His independent spirit invited the attack of Tughril-Tughan who seems to have made a successful raid into the kingdom of Tirhut. Sir Jadunath has rightly asserted that the raid yielded him rich booty but no submission.[189] Even Balban hurried as far as the frontiers of Tirhut.[190] He marched against Mughisuddin of Lakhanauti by way of Tirhut till his progress was checked somewhere between Tirhut and Lakhanauti. The internal dissensions among the Muslim governors of Bihar, Oudh and Lakhanauti and their own problems of stabilisation hardly allowed them any time to come to Tirhut. The epithets like **Bhujabalabhima** and **Bhimaparakrama** attributed to Ramasimha, and the evidence of Chatrakara and Dharmaswami enable us to hold that he contributed to 'dull the sharp edge of the striking Muslim swords'[191], and thereby maintained the independence of Mithila. It is true that we do not know any successful exploits of Ramasimha but this much is sure that he had to fight against his Muslim adversaries to protect his own kingdom and in such entanglement he had appreciable success. Ramasimha was by all means a successful ruler.

SAKTISIMHADEVA (SAKRASIMHADEVA)

Mithila tradition asserts that Sakrasimha succeeded Ramasimhadeva[192], whereas some believe that the successor of Ramasimha was Saktisimhadeva.[193] Saktisimha is also mentioned in the Pratapamalla's



inscription.[194] In view of these conflicting evidences it is desirable to discuss here the problem of succession after Ramasimha, as the whole question of Mithila chronology under the Karnatas is yet in a state of hopeless confusion. Not only the Mithila tradition but also the **Vamsavali** in the private library of Kaiser, consulted by K P Jayaswal[195], place Sakrasimha as the successor of Ramasimha. The **VK** and the **Muditakuvalayaswa** sharply diverge from these accounts and instead of Sakti or Sakrasimha, they have one Bhavasimha. In the **MSS** of **Kasikavivaranopanjika**[196], there is the name of a king of Tirhut, Virasimhadeva, ruling in Mithila on November 12, 1260. There is no mention of Virasimha in any tradition of Mithila's history. Petech believes that 'oscillation in the names of Ramasimha's successor seems to point to a period of civil war.'[197] Only a few exact dates in the Karnata chronology are known to us:

a) Nanyadeva's accession in 1097 AD;
b) Birth of Ramasimhadeva in 1183 AD (Petech – 194); and
c) Ramasimhadeva's accession in 1227 AD (Dharmaswami).

According to the Nepalese sources, between Saktisimha and Narasimha, Bhupalasimha or Karmasimha ruled. On the basis of **VK** (p.15), Petech has constructed the chronological set up of the Karnatas in the following manner – in 1097 Nanyadeva ascended the throne. He was followed by Gangadeva, the latter by Narasimhadeva, he by Ramasimha and the latter by Bhavasimha, he by Karmasimha to be succeeded by his son Harasimha in Saka 1205 (1283 AD). The chronological order up to Ramasimha in the **VT** is the same as above and then it stops. Saka 1019 and 1205 are the two definite dates in the **VT**.

The most curious, but the noticeable point in the history of Mithila after Ramasimha is the mention of Sakti (or Sakrasimha) in the Mithila tradition as a ruler and Bhupalasimha is also somewhere mentioned casually. They have not been assigned any reign period in the Nepalese tradition whereas in Mithila we find one Virasimhadeva ruling in 1260 AD. In the absence of any genealogical table, we may assume that Virasimha was possibly ruling in that part of Tirhut of which Malladeva had been the master after the death of Nanyadeva. He might have been a descendant of Malladeva and that is why he has been ignored in the Mithila tradition and even the Nepalese sources have not cared to mention him because he was not in the direct line of succession of the ruling dynasty of Nanyadeva. There is grave doubt about Saktisimha too. Saktisimha does not come as a lineal descendant of Ramasimha in the **Vamsavali**. Under the circumstances we may take Saktisimha to be a descendant of Virasimha (and thus of Malladeva). In the present state of our knowledge, while it is not possible to agree with Petech that there was a civil war after Ramasimha, the probable explanation seems to be that Sakra (Saktisimha) was ruling in the eastern part of Mithila and Harasimha in his paternal territory of Simaraongarh. If Ramasimha's son was Bahavasimha he certainly predeceased his father. Bhavasimha does not find any specific mention in any tradition. The confusion, thus created after Ramasimha, seems to have been got mixed up in the tradition, which has been so faithfully maintained with minor differences here and there. Another possibility is that Sakrasimha of Malladeva's line might have taken advantage of this confusion but was ultimately routed by Harasimha, and the chroniclers thus confused the issue. The fact that he adopted autocratic attitude, which offended his nobles, is indicative of some extraordinary event. In no case can we push Ramasimha earlier than 1279. Even if Karmasimha be accepted as his grandson it must be said that he was overthrown by Sakrasimha. Sakrasimha's extraordinary power

offended his nobles. Sakrasimha remained satisfied with Sakkuri (modern Sakuri) and the surrounding areas, while Harasimha remained entrenched in the vicinity of Simaraongarh. The problem would remain a mystery until the descendants of Malladeva are brought to light. It may be conjectured here that Sakrasimha belonged to different line and even when he tried to join the two houses of the Karnatas (the house of Gangadeva and Malladeva), the people refused to acknowledge him as the king of Mithila.

Saktisimha of the Nepal inscription seems to have been confused with Sakrasimha, the traditional founder of Sakuri.[198] It is believed that on the death of Ramasimha he ascended the throne in his early forties. He is said to have been a contemporary of Alauddin Khalji. It is said that in AH 697 (1206-7 AD), there was a Muslim invasion of Mithila and the Muslim army was led by Sheikh Mohammad Ismail. A t first the victory smiled on the Karnatas but ultimately they were forced to agree to pay taxes. It is also suggested therein that the Maithila king was arrested and when he promised to pay tax, he was released and was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the Hindu army of Alauddin Khalji.[199] He helped Alauddin against Hammira of Ranthambor. A **Maqbara** at Darbhanga reminds one of the struggle between the Muslims and Sakrasimha. Sakuri and Sukhidighi still commemorate the name of this king. The Mithila tradition preserves an account that Sakrasimha with his minister Devaditya and Vireswara went to the court of Alauddin Khalji. His help to Alauddin against Hammira might have been a reality as we see that Hammira is mentioned in some contemporary literature like Chandeswara's **Krtyachintamani** and also in the **Prakritapaingalam**.[200] Sakrasimha might have helped Alauddin as a protective measure against the Governor of the Sultan of Bengal, Ruknuddin Kaikaus. Sakrasimha is called '**Hammbiradhwantabhanu**'. Alauddin conferred on Devaditya the title of **Mantriratnakara**. Sakrasimha seems to have succeeded in maintaining the integrity of Mithila to the best of his abilities. If the theory of Alauddin's conquest of Nepal be accepted, it would be plausible to suggest that after his fight with Sakrasimha and later with his collaboration, Alauddin made a dash into Nepal, and got his coin struck there. For the present we have no other evidence to suggest Sakrasimha's alliance with Alauddin in latter's campaign against Hammira except the Mithila tradition and the confused account of Mulla Taquia.

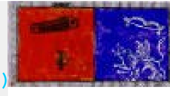
A very important evidence enables us to hazard a conjecture in the present state of our knowledge. Bengal had extended its influence into the very heart of Mithila and it appears that the size of the Karnata kingdom was considerably reduced. The Maheswara inscription of Firuz Aitigin, Governor of Ruknuddin Kaikaus of Bihar, speaks of a magnificent building constructed on the northern bank of the Gandaka in the vicinity of Maheswara, a village in the district of Begusarai. The high sounding titles of Firuz Aitigin is suggestive of the fact that he wielded sufficient powers. The inscription is dated in the year 1290/1291 AD and is one of the earliest inscriptions of north eastern India. It is reasonable to assume that a good portion of the Karnata kingdom between the Gandaka and the Ganges passed into the hands of the Bengal Sultan. Since the Hindu rulers of Tirhut were then following a policy of **Vetasivritti**, there was nothing unnatural if Sakrasimha, after being defeated by Alauddin, sought his alliance as a protection against Bengal. If the contention about Sakrasimha (as belonging to the line of Malladeva be accepted), it is fair to surmise that his kingdom was too small and as such, being pressed on all sides by the Muslims, he had placed his services at the disposal of his Khalji masters. The erection of a big structure on the bank of Gandaka by Firuz Aitigin was possibly against the Karnatas of Mithila.

The assumption of lofty titles by this government of Ruknuddin Kaikaus in Bihar shows the attitude of the Balbani line towards the Khaljis.[201] The Maheswara inscription is no doubt a rare discovery in so far as the history of north Bihar is concerned.[202] From all these it is evident that the glory of the Karnatas of Mithila during the reign of Sakrasimha was on the wane.

He was a despotic and audacious ruler and cared a fig for the welfare of his people. Temperamentally he was harsh and hot headed. His despotism offended the nobles and one of his ministers established a Council of Seven Elders[203], as a check upon the autocratic powers of the king. There seems to have been some sort of palace revolution which deprived the king of his actual power. When and how his reign came to an end we do not exactly know. The palace revolution seems to have forced him to abdicate the throne possibly in favour of Harasimha, who was then, just a minor. The executive power was naturally vested in the Council of Elders who seems to have run the administration till Harasimha came of age and took over the reins of government.

PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION AFTER SAKRASIMHA

In the inscription of Pratapamalla, there is one more king, Bhupalasimha, and he is placed between Saktisimha and Harasimha.[204] This king does not find mention in any Mithila tradition nor there is any reign period allotted to this king in the Nepalese sources. While in the Nepal **Vamsavali**, Harasimha has been shown as a successor of Ramasimha, in the Nepal inscription Harasimha is shown as a son and successor of Bhupalasimhadeva. The **Vamsavalis** are more or less sometimes confusing and misleading while the Nepal inscription approaches near the Mithila tradition. In one of the Mithila traditions, Saktisimha had a son Bhupala and whether Bhupala ruled or not, it is difficult to say. Pratapamalla's inscription, modern **Vamsavalis** and K P Jayaswal place Bhupala between Saktisimha and Harasimha while the **VK** and the **Muditakuvalayaswa** place Karmasimha between the two. The **VK** has Ramasimha, son Bhavasimha, son Karmasimha, son Harasimha who ascended the throne in **Saka** 1205. No colophon, literary or even epigraphic evidence bears testimony to the rule of Bhupalasimha. Here we have to bear in mind that the Pratapamalla inscription simply gives the genealogy of the Karnata dynasty and not the actual rulers, while the **Vamsavalis**, though confused, gives us the list of the rulers of Mithila. Even the relationship between Bhupala and Karmasimha is also not known to us. Both Bhavasimha and Karmasimha do not seem to have ruled in Mithila while Bhupala seems to have predeceased Harasimha. We know that Sakrasimha came to the throne of Mithila at a comparatively later age in view of this long reign of Ramasimhadeva. How long Sakrasimha ruled we cannot definitely say. If the authority of the colophon of a **ASB MSS** (No.G.4795) of the **Bhattikavyam** dated in the **LS** 159, be accepted, Harasimha began his reign in 1278/1279 AD. This evidence is not supported by any positive evidence of merit. If this solitary evidence be accepted as a valid ground for any conjecture, it must be admitted that Harisimha ruled nearly for fifty years and in that case he must have ascended the throne as a minor. Though seventh in descent from Nanyadeva, he was the sixth and the last king of the Karnata dynasty.[205] There is some lacuna in both the Nepalese and the Mithila traditions. The only possible solution to this mysterious question is to be sought in the fact that since Bhupalasimha predeceased Harasimha, he does not find a place in the Mithila tradition, though he is mentioned in the genealogical table of Nepal. No evidence bears testimony to the rule of Bhupalasimha. Similarly Bhavasimha and Karmasimha do not



seem to have ruled. To whatever line Sakra (Sakti) Simha belonged, it does not matter. He seems to have been succeeded by Harasimha.

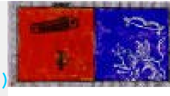
Harasimhadeva has been spelt as Harisimha in the Nepalese inscriptions, in Vidyapati's **Puruspariksa**, in the **Panji** and in the traditional **slokas**, and also in the **ASB MSS** No.8224. Only in one of the **MSS** of the **Krtyaratnakara** of Chandeswara, he has been spelt as 'Harasimha'.[206] Henceforth, he will be spelt as Harisimhadeva of Mithila.

HARISIMHADEVA (1279-1325 AD)

Harisimhadeva was the last great king of the Karnata dynasty, and was the greatest king of Mithila after Nanyadeva. His reign forms a landmark not only in the history of Mithila but also in the whole of north eastern India. Like all other kings of the dynasty, we have no epigraphic or numismatic evidence to build up a scientific history and the only evidence we have to lean upon is literary. Needless to emphasise that literary sources are sometimes confusing. In the **Puruspariksa**, he has been called **Karnatakulasambhava**, **Karnatavamsodbhava**, in the **Krtyaratnakara** of Chandeswara, **Karnatachudamani** and also in the **Dhurtasamagama** of Jyotiriswara Thakur and as **Hindupati** Harisimha in the **Parijataharana** of Umapati. His contribution to the development of Mithila is immense and like all great kings he left no stone unturned to make Mithila great and prosperous in his own. Harisimhadeva, though not perfect, must be reckoned as one of the greatest kings of Mithila. He was the last great Hindu king of North India.

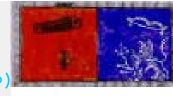
If Mithila tradition is to be relied upon, Harisimha was born in 1294 but this statement runs counter to a statement preserved in a **MSS** of the **Bhattikavyatika** (**ASB MSS** No.G – 4795) by Srinivasa dated in the **L.Sam** 159 (1278-79 AD). We cannot reject this evidence outright. On the basis of this evidence, the earliest limit of the reign of Harisimha may be fixed at 1279 AD, and if the **VT** is to be relied upon, his coronation took place in 1205 **Saka** (1283 AD). If the date of the establishment of the **Panji** system be taken as 1294-95 AD, it may be presumed that he assumed the reins of government in 1284-85 AD. A long reign of about fifty years is not improbable for a king under whom three generations of ministers served. Tradition would have us believe that Harisimha was a minor when he ascended the throne. My contention about Sakrasimha stands further confirmed that he belonged to a different line (belonging to the line of Malladeva) and even if he tried to join the two houses of the Karnatas, the people refused to acknowledge him as a king of Mithila as in that case the commentator of the **Bhattikavya** must not have mentioned the name of Harisimha. Harisimha was seventh in descent from Nanyadeva. According to Chanda Jha, Harisimha was born in 1294 and ascended the throne in 1307.[207] Jayaswal puts the date of Harisimha's accession at 1310 AD.[208] From the **Puruspariksa** of Vidyapati, we learn that Harisimha was a contemporary of Yadava king Ramachandra of Devagiri and the two kings were on terms of correspondence.[209] We learn further from the same source that Harisimha was a contemporary of king Udayasimha of Gorakhpur.[210] All these kings flourished in the first quarter of the fourteenth century and there is nothing unnatural if there was some sort of relationship amongst them.

We have seen above that the autocratic behaviour of Saktisimha had offended the nobles and they, possibly as a protest, had formed a Council of their own and held the reins of Government till Harisimha

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came of age. It seems that minor Harisimha was declared to be the king but actual power was wielded by the Councillors who seem to have assumed sufficient political status. Ganeswara[211] was one of the ablest ministers of Harisimha. He was in-charge of Department of Home Affairs. The introduction to Ganeswara's **Sugati-Sopana** throws a very interesting light on the constitutional history of Mithila. Ganeswara presided over the Council of Feudal Nobles in Mithila and he had such high sounding titles as **Maharajadhiraja, Mahasamanta** and **Mahamattaka**. The colophon of the **Ganga-pattaka** refers to the author of **Mahasamantadhipa**, a title once borne by the founder of the Karnata dynasty. This colophon is indicative of the fact that there existed powerful feudal lords headed by Ganeswara in the court of Harisimha.[212] They seem to have ruled Mithila during the minority of Harisimha and managed to strengthen their position in their respective spheres of administration, because we find these ministers granting lands and villages to persons without king's sanction.[213] Ganeswara, Vireswara, Devaditya, Chandeswara and others were very powerful ministers. We learn from the **Prakritapaingalam**[214] that Chandeswara was a powerful minister and that Haribrahma, a poet of the Avahatta literature, wrote a poem as a panegyric on his patron (Chandeswara) and described him as a mighty minister. Inspite of the immense power of these feudal nobles, it must be said that everything in the state was done in the name of the king. The feudal lords had amassed wealth during the minority of Harisimha and had practically usurped all power. Harisimha's accession to the throne as a minor must have accounted for the rapid rise of these feudal nobles to power. It was Devaditya who successfully carried on the administration of the state. Though we find the mention of Simaramapur in the contemporary Sanskrit texts, popular tradition suggests that he (Harisimha) had a second capital at Harisimhapur.[215]

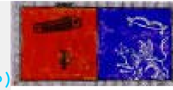
The introductory verse of the **Sugati-Sopana** gives us a picture of the then political condition of Mithila and the adjoining states. Feudal barons like Devaditya, Ganeswara and Chandeswara are recorded to have fought successfully against Hammira, **Surtrana** and the **Mlechas**. It also refers to Gauda and shows some contact with the Muslims. We do not know exactly as to what type of contact Harisimha had with the Gaudas. The Muslim kingdom of Bengal was then divided and the power-seekers were fighting among themselves. It has been suggested by Mulla Taquia that Harisimha was in league with the rebel Bengal Governor Bahadur Shah. That might have been his crime which possibly brought Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq to Tirhut, a point to which we shall revert later. Placed as Harisimha was, he could not have thought of leading any expedition against Gauda. It is true that he was a man of independent temperament and as a patriot thought of putting a stop to the Muslim incursions in Tirhut. This might have goaded him to form a league with the rebel Bengal Governor. A verse in the **Danaratnakara** says that Mithila was sinking in the ocean of the **Mlechas**. Harisimha possibly defeated some Muslim king, a fact corroborated by both Chandeswara and Jyotiriswara. It is believed that Harisimha was able to recover his kingdom after the tide was stemmed, since it was after the expulsions of Muslims or after their voluntary retirement, that **Dhurtasamagama** and **Danaratnakara** were written. The **Dhurtasamagama** seems to have been staged before the king marking his victory over the Muslims. It appears that some sort of raid actually took place from some neighbouring Muslim kingdoms. The literary sources bear testimony to the fact that Chandeswara took an active part in expelling them out. This expulsion of the Muslims appear to be transitory in character as we find them frequenting the region of Tirhut off and on, and it fell to the lot of Harisimha to lose to the Muslims the last semblance of Hindu independence in north eastern India. The **Surtrana** of Jyotiriswara's **Dhurtasamagama** has



been identified by some with Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (**ST** – 67; **MTV** – 135) which is impossible. Jayaswal thinks that the **Danaratnakara** verse refers to the defeat of the Bengal Sultan, probably the same for which credit is given to Ganeswara (**RR** – 18 fn).

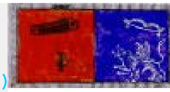
While chances for expansion of his authority in north India were nil in view of the growing power of the Muslims, he seems to have tried to strengthen his position in Nepal which was weakened during the reign of Ramasimhadeva. The political condition of Nepal during the first quarter of the fourteenth century was in a state of flux. In the last decade of the 13th century, in **NS** 409 (1289 AD) or **NS** 411 (1291 AD), the ruler of Tirhut invaded Nepal and took Bhatagaon, but he too retired at once. In **NS** 431 (1311 AD), the **Tirhutiya** came again, took Patan and looted and pillaged the whole country (**VK** – p.10 quoted in Petech, 215-16). These invasions took place during the reign of Anantamalla (1274-1310) under whom the central government of Nepal had become weak. D W Wright has also suggested that during the reigns of Anantamalla and his son, there was anarchy in Nepal (Op.cit – pp.167-177). As Nepal was experiencing **Matsyanyaya** it was the most opportune moment for an ambitious expansionist to strike Nepal which was already facing invasion from the north and the west.[216] The invasion of Nepal by Tirhut in 1311 might be connected with the one for which Chandeswara takes credit.[217] The effects of these two successive invasions seem to have weakened the political stability of Nepal. The confusion in Nepal facilitated invasions from all sides. Chandeswara's conquest of Nepal is described in his **Krtyaratnakara**. The traditional view is that Chandeswara conquered the whole of Nepal and is said to have uprooted the kings of Raghu progeny, to have touched the foot of Pasupati (possibly being the first to do so) and to have performed the **Tulapurusa** sacrifice, on the bank of river Bagmati. This function took place in Saka 1236 (1314 AD) when he gave away his weight in gold. It appears that the **Tulapurusadana** was not yet obsolete in Mithila. This conquest of Nepal by Chandeswara was only a passing phase in the stormy career of Harisimhadeva. Here it should be borne in mind that the Karnatas held sway over Nepal since the time of Nanyadeva but the rise of the Mallas and other native powers had shaken the Karnata authority[218] and therefore Chandeswara had to re-stabilise the position of his master over there between 1311 and 1314. But even this invasion for the present did not give Harisimha a preponderant position in Nepal as we find a Thakuri prince ruling there in 1318, however weak he might have been.

From 1291 onwards Tirhut had begun to invade Nepal. If the **VT** date of Harisimha is to be relied upon, it may be suggested that few years after his accession, he led an expedition against the Mallas of Nepal since they had grown powerful and possibly thrown off the shackles of Karnata domination. From Simaraon the Karnatas had claimed sovereignty over the local princes of the Nepal valley, which, in those days comprised a much smaller area lying between the basins of the Gandaka and the Kosi, twenty miles in length and twelve miles in breadth watered by the river of Bagmati.[219] The Mallas, after stabilising themselves in Nepal, were extending their authority in the Terai area and by the time of Anantamalla they had practically conquered a good portion of it. A **graffito**, dated 1234 of an unspecified era, was discovered long ago. Levi took it to be of the **Vikrama Samvat** and placed it in 1177 AD, but Petech has rightly not only corrected the reading of the present one but has also discovered a new one which gives the name of Ripumalla (dated 1234) and his son and successor Sangramamalla. The date has been referred to the Saka era and thus it comes to 1312 AD. From this **Graffito** it appears that the Mallas extended their power up to Nilgriva in the Terai area. The Mallas were divided into two



branches at Patan and Bhatagaon in the last quarter of the 13th century. The feudal chiefs were getting the upper hand and the country was passing through a critical period facilitating the invasion from Tirhut for which Chandeswara takes credit. The conquest of Nepal by his minister Chandeswara gave Harisimha a political foothold in the valley. All the traditional **slokas** and the evidence furnished by the **VK**, the **VL** suggest that Harisimha entered Nepal, after his debacle at the hands of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in 1324/25 AD. The **MSS** in the India Office Library[220] has the following variant in the last half of the verse – **duradai-desita pathatagirim vivesa**. On the basis of all these **slokas**, traditional and otherwise, the date corresponds to December 7, 1323 AD, which was a Wednesday and not a Saturday.[221] From a colophon of the **MSS**, **Jatisamgraha**[222], it appears that the introduction into Nepal of the mysterious goddess **Taleju** is attributed to Harisimha. Its temple in Khatamandu is the highest in the town, and its shrine in the Darbar of Bhatagaon is inaccessible to the Europeans. Even the Nepalese traditions ascribe this installation to Harisimha. Bendall, though disbelieving the story of the invasion altogether, admits that Harisimha and his ancestors were 'as almost titular kings of Nepal even if they really claimed sovereignty over the valley of Nepal.'[223] Harisimha's retirement to Nepal was compelled by the force of circumstance and fate. Nepal had already acknowledged his suzerainty. There is an old chronicle in Nepal which suggests that 'Harisimha, expelled from Simaraon came to Deopatan and received many riches ....in 446 Magha Sukla 3 (January 7, 1326 AD)'. This seems to be one year too late in comparison with the Muslim sources but we may suppose that before his arrival in Deopatan he had wandered in the Terai area for several months. In any case the mistake is very old, as no **MSS** gives variant for the **stanza**.[224] The **VK**, **VT** and the **VW** refer to Harisimha's entry into the hill. Petech also disbelieves his entry into Nepal and suggests that his end is unknown. From the text of the **Vamsavali**, in possession of D R Regmi, the same conclusion is arrived at. Petech observes: "....his (Harisimha's) son Jagatasimha, of course, would have taken his place among the highest nobility of the land. This would explain why the later chronicles have made Harisimha an ancestor of the royal family and a king of Bhatagaon, although he never ruled there. ....the link between the Later Mallas and Harisimha can be sought only here and nowhere else." (Petech – 116) Jagatasimha's marriage with Nayak Devi and his rule at Bhatagaon is indicative of the fact that Harisimha must have ruled there. If we disbelieve Harisimha's rule, then how could 'Jagatasimha enjoy kingship as a son of Harisimha?' (Petech – 115) Harisimha's entry into Nepal was nothing more than the entrenchment of his power which he was enjoying since long. All others were ruling as his vassals otherwise there was no reason why **Vamsavali** should have mentioned his successors as rulers of Nepal. In the present state of our knowledge it is very difficult to reject outright Harisimha's rule in Nepal. R C Mazumdar has rightly suggested that it was Harisimha's re-entry into Nepal, the resources of which enabled him to resist the Sultan of Delhi in the jungle (**JBRS** – XLIII.P.5).

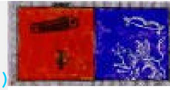
Harisimha had to contend against powerful Muslim armies from all sides (**Supra**). In all the Muslim sources, referring to the invasion of Tirhut by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, with the solitary exception of Mulla Taquia, the name of the ruler of Tirhut is conspicuous by its absence. Chandeswara, Ganeswara and Jyotiriswara bear testimony to the fact that the land of Mithila was flooded by the waves of Mlechas and from the **Dhurtasamagama** we learn that Harisimha had some initial success over the Muslim Sultan. The latest opinion is that the 'exulting references to victories over the Muslims can hardly apply to that episode (Ghiyasuddin). ....Harisimha scored successes against the Muslims ....during the last days of the Mamluka sultans after the death of Balban in 1267 AD.'[225] The recent discovery of the Maheswara



inscription[226], dated 1290/91 AD (infra) supports this view. The extention of Kaikaus power up to the bank of Gandaka in north Bihar might have precipitated a contest between the Hindus and the Muslims and Firuz Aitigin, the governor, seems to have erected a big fort on the Gandaka as a protection agaist the Karnatas. Possibly it was this event that led the author of the **Sugati-Sopana** to think of Harisimha's contact with Gauda and provided Jyotiriswara with the material for his drama. Verse 4 of the **Krtyaratnakara** suggests that Harisimha subdued his enemies, while verse 10 suggests that Vireswara, after having stormed the enemy fort, excavated a big tank at **Dahivata** and granted the village of Ramapura to the **Srotriyas**. Chandeswara is also credited with having rescued the earth submerged in the flood of **Mlechas**. While all these events are based on hypothetical propositions, with Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, we come on a surer footing of sober history.

All the Muslim sources are unanimous on the point that Harisimha of Tirhut was defeated by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. There is a striking similarity between Isami and the author of the **Basatinul-uns**. These two accounts do not say anything about the fall of the fort of Tirhut and the capture of its king. According to the **Basatinul-uns**, the king of Tirhut had a very strong army and fort and though not very powerful, he was proud of his might. He had insulted previous kings and was not in a mood to submit. His fort was surrounded on all sides by water and jungles (Folios 10, 11, 12). The compiler of this **MSS** was Mohammad Sadre Ala Ahmad Hasan Dabir, a hereditary servant at the Delhi court and the secretary of the Royal Chancery. The work was compiled in the first year of the reign of Mohammad bin Tughlaq (For details – Supra). Harisimha seems to have fought successfully against the invader, though victory smiled on the Tughlaq invaders. Isami, read with Hasan Dabir, gives a clear picture. According to Dabir, Ghiyasuddin handed over the charge of administration to the native people and according to Isami, Ahmad was left in-charge of Tirhut as the imperial representative in Tirhut. Both these authorities suggests that Harisimha was not arrested rather he escaped. After this episode, Harisimha failed to restore his authority in Tirhut and he settled in Nepal. The silence of Barani, Yahya and Nizamuddin does not presuppose the return of Harisimha after the departure of Ghiyasuddin, nor has any connection with the event mentioned in the **Dhurtasamagama**. Since the Tughlaq conquest of Tirhut could be possible without any long and protracted struggle and hence their silence. This conquest sounded the death knell of the independent Karnata kingdom of Mithila. Viewed from the political stand-point, Harisimha's reign was bristling with hectic activities and within a short compass he did not play an insignificant part in the political history of the eastern part of India. Like Nanyadeva he had his famous adversaries and notable contemporaries. If Nanyadeva is credited with having laid the foundation of an independent dynasty in Mithila, Harisimha, the illustrious ruler, will go down in the annals of Tirhut as 'the greatest social reformer who organised the Mithila society in a new set up which is yet extant despite its adverse effects.' (**TM** – 278) His reign was fruitful both politically and socially. The remains at Simaraon are enough to make one 'form an idea of what the Hindus of Mithila achieved prior to the advent of the Muslims' and the ruins over there are the living tales of 'five centuries of incessant struggle between the Muslim bigotry and Hindu retaliation.' (**JASB** – IV.121)

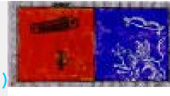
His achievements in the fields of social reform are remarkable. His reforms in the sphere of society and religion did revolutionise the life of the people of the then Mithila. The Maithilas have been well known for their excessive orthodoxy and conservatism. According to Grierson, Mithila has been a tract too



proud to admit other nationalities to intercourse on equal terms, and has passed without changing its ancestral law (**LSI**.V – pt-II.p.4). The first quarter of the 14th century AD saw the systematisation and crystallisation of **Kulinism** in Mithila, which is believed to be in existence since the 10th century AD. Harisimha is credited with having organised the entire Maithila society on new lines. Though it might seem progressive to some, it was one of the most conservative reforms the staggering effects of which are seen even today. The traditional story is that Pandita Harinath Upadhyaya contracted a marriage which was not in keeping with the **Sastri** regulations and both the husband and wife were not far removed in descent of relationship. Naturally therefore the marriage, thus contracted by an oversight, created a flutter in the Maithila society and the matter was brought to the notice of the ruling monarch Harisimha.[227] He immediately ordered for the re-organisation of the Panji and that was completed in Saka 1216 (1294 AD).[228] According to another tradition it was done in 1313 AD. A genealogy of the Maithila Brahmanas and Maithila Kayasthas were prepared under the orders of Harisimhadeva and that is maintained with scrupulous exactness even today by both of them. The Brahamanas were divided into the following four groups in order of kulinism[229]: i.) The Srotriya, ii) The Jogyas, iii) The Panjibadhas, and iv) The Jaibaras. These divisions were incorporated in the marriage rules, which ultimately gave birth to the **Panjikaras** and the **Ghatakas**. The **Panjikaras** maintained the **Panjis** and they issued 'certificate of right' (**aswajanapatra**) at the time of marriage or on the occasion of the **Siddhanta** ceremony. Like the Brahmanas, the Kayasthas are also said to have been divided into **Bhalamanusas** and **Grihasthas** according to their **Mulas**. The Mulas were not thrust upon the Kayasthas as Thakur thinks (**TM** – 362), but they were divided into twelve important **Mulas** in the name of those twelve persons who had accompanied Nanyadeva from the Karnata country to Mithila.[230]

Like the Brahmanas the Kayasthas were divided into four main groups: i) Those twelve Kayasthas including the Family of Sridharadas, who had come with Nanyadeva were placed in the first group; ii) Those twenty families who were invited to come to Mithila after the establishment of the Karnata dynasty were placed in the second group; iii) those thirty families who came later were placed in the third group; and iv) Those who came last were placed in the fourth group. Suryakara Thakur, a descendant of Sridharadas, played an important part in the organisation of the **Panji** system. The twelve Kayasthas who accompanied Nanyadeva were – Laksmikara, Prabhakara, Devi, Punyakaradeva, Srikara, Shyama, Salakhanadeva, Sripati, Srirama, Harihara, Ratikara and Ratnadeva (ancestor of the writer of these lines). Like the Brahmanas, the Kayasthas have also their own **Panjikaras**. It is believed that these genealogical tables were also maintained by the Ksatriyas and other castes of Tirhut[231], which fell into disuse after sometime. It is now carefully maintained only by the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas. Harisimha's intention was to protect the purity of blood and avoid the forbidden degrees of relationship and marriages.[232] The system of Kulinism divided the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas into a number of sections and sub-sections in order of merit.[233]

For the protection of the orthodox social set-up in Mithila, books on **Smrities** and **Nibandas** were written and compiled during the reign of Harisimhadeva. In these books the duties of the four castes were clearly defined and viewed from the modern standpoint, it can be said that the old rules were thrashed more and more and the people were advised to abide by the traditional rules and customs. Chandeswara, one of the ministers of Harisimha, wrote a number of digests, known as **Ratnakaras**. From



these **Ratnakaras**, it appears that all aspects of life were not only thoroughly discussed in the court but advices were also offered to the king by the ministers on such subjects. Important principles of the Hindu Law were founded during the reign of Harisimhadeva and the **Vivadaratnakara** continued to be the ruling authority of the Mithila school of Hindu Law. The **Krtyaratnakara** also deals with the Hindu and Civil Laws. In keeping with the traditions of the Karnata rulers, Harisimhadeva also constructed a large number of temples and got dug tanks and wells for the benefit of his subject. He is credited with having founded Harisimhapur, which was possibly his second capital. He maintained the traditional glory of his family though at last he had to bid adieu to his motherland in face of heavy Muslim incursions on all sides. With him the last semblance of independent Hindu kingdom went out of existence.

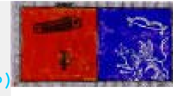
ESTIMATE OF HARISIMHADEVA

His stormy political career, bristling with hectic activities all round, had left a permanent impress on the life and culture of the people of Mithila. Not only as a conqueror and an able administrator but also as a philanthropic ruler, he will go down in history as one of the greatest kings of north-eastern India. His relationship with the kings of Gorakhpur and Devagiri is indicative of the fact that he was aware of the diplomatic importance of such contacts. He was not only a warrior but also a great reformer and patron of art and letters. His court thronged with scholars like Devaditya, Vireswara, Chandeswara, Jyotiriswara, Umapati, Suryakara, Guneswara and a host of others. These shining luminaries would have been an asset to any court of the classical age of Indian history. It is clear from Vidyapati's **Purusapariksa**, that he was a great lover of music and singing. Religious literature, drama, poetry, music, criticism, erotics and **Nibandhas** in large numbers were produced at his court. His reign saw the birth and the consequent crystallisation of the Maithili literature. His entry into Nepal facilitated the expansion of Maithili literature, art, culture and traditions in Nepal as a result of the host of scholars accompanying him over there. It has been rightly pointed out that the remains of Simaraon are enough to make one 'form just idea of what the Hindus of Mithila achieved prior to the advent of the Muslims' in Tirhut.

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF MITHILA UNDER THE KARNATAS

INTRODUCTION: The Karnata period has been regarded as the most memorable epoch in the history of Mithila. Paucity of sources stands in our way for a comprehensive study of the Karnata administrative system. There are only two known inscriptions of the Karnata period and they throw practically no light on the administrative system. The **Panchobh CP** gives us a list of some important administrative officers. Naturally, therefore, we have to depend on the contemporary **Smritis** and **Nibandhas**. **Rajniti-Kalpataru** of Laksmidhara Bhatta, **Rajniti-Kamadhenu** of Gopal, and the **Ratnakaras** of Chandeswara are the only positive sources for the study of the administrative system of Mithila. It is on the basis of the **Rajniti-Ratnakara** of Chandeswara that we can sketch a brief account of the constitution of Mithila under the Karnatas.

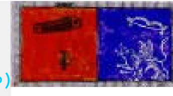
Under the Palas, Mithila was an important centre of administration. Tirabhukti was one of the **Jayaskandhavaras** of the Palas. It seems that the Karnatas modelled their administrative system on the lines of the Palas and the Senas, though in view of the local conditions, certain changes were brought about. Chandeswara in his own way has contributed to the development of political thought in Mithila.



His **Rajniti-Ratnakara** is divided into sixteen chapters and deals with the following: kinship, ministers, minister of Religion, Lord Chief Justice, Councillors, fort, discussion of policy, treasury, the army, commander-in-chief, ambassadors, administration, executive authority, punishment, abdication, appointment of a new king by the minister of Religion, coronation, etc. Besides the **RR**, we get a glimpse of the Karnata administrative system from **VR** of Jyotiriswara. In the **VR** the court life has been vividly described. Along list of administrative officers is also preserved therein. The **VR** deals with a number of problems and enumerates the names of the following officers – **Bhupala, Mandalika, Samanta, Danapati, Purapati, Mantri, Purohit, Dharmadhikarana, Sandhivigrahika, Mahamattaka, Pratibala, Karanadhyaksa, Santikaranika, Rajaguru, Durgapala**, and others. The coronation ceremony has been discussed in details in the **VR**. It has been rightly pointed that the list of officers and courtiers in the **VR** is longer than any such contemporary lists. Thus the **RR** and the **VR** supplement each other. Here it should also be borne in mind that Chandeswara departs from the old titles of **Arthasastra** or **Dandaniti** and adopts the new term **Rajniti** or the Royal Polity. The **RR** discloses to us the fact that there was a work attributed to Narada dealing with Politics. He also quotes from a work called 'Rajniti'. K P Jayaswal has rightly pointed out: "The Ratnakara is thus valuable on the history of political literature. ....Of still more importance are the norms which obtained at the close of the Hindu and beginning of the Muhammadan periods. ....There is no lack of interest and no total surrender of reason." (Introduction to the **RR**)

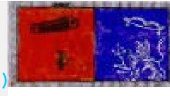
THE KING: The king was at the head of the administration. On the authority of Manu, Chandeswara has drawn our attention to the divinity of the king. The king was an incarnation of God on the earth (**RR** – p.68). The minister of Religion had an important say in constitutional matters. The coronation ceremony of the king was performed in accordance with the Vedic rites (pp.70-74). The ministers played an important part in the coronation ceremony. Chandeswara propounded the theory that a weak or an old king should abdicate and go in for a life of austerity, penance and salvation. The coronation oath, as suggested by Chandeswara, lays down that the country is god and that the king in protecting it will consider it as such. According to Chandeswara, the king is one who protects his subject (**RR** – p.2). Indivisibility of the kingdom was one of cardinal principles of his polity as we find Chandeswara saying, "leadership, if divided, would destroy the state." (p.72) According to Chandeswara, royal property was that which was owned by the whole people (p.72). He was a supporter of Benevolent Monarchy. The king should be just and honest. He should love his subject in the manner he loves his own self. He should protect his subject in times of war and peace and should act wisely on critical occasions to save his kingdom. According to Chandeswara, king should not only be efficient in his own way but should be the master of details. He should be well conversant with every detail of administration and should possess the ability to handle any situation, arising within or without the state, successfully.

The increased royal power is reflected in the assumption of high sounding titles like **Parameswara, Paramabhattaraka, Maharajadhiraja, Mahanrpati, Ksitipala, Bhupala, Mithiladhipati, Bhujabalabhima, Bhimabalabhima, Bhimaparakrama, Karnatachudamani, Dasamadevatara, Karnatabhumipatimukutamancha**, etc. All these titles are evidently based on the model of the Palas and the Senas. To a very large extent, the tradition of the Pala administrative system was maintained. The Karnatas, likewise, developed a huge administrative machinery with various officers of state, a list of which is available to us from the **RR** and the **VR**. Of course, the form of government was monarchical



and the succession to the royal throne seems to have been based strictly on hereditary principles except in the case of Malladeva, who, though heir-apparent, does not seem to have got the throne, Bhupalasimha and Virasimha of the Nepal inscription and the **Vamsavali**. Nothing definite is known about them or their succession claims. We have no information about the actual position of the **Yuvaraja** in the Karnata constitutional hierarchy.

THE MINISTERS: Generations of Brahmana and Kayastha families were associated with the Karnata rulers and it appears that hereditary principle was observed in the appointment of ministers. On the basis of the panegyric element in the literary sources, it may be pointed out that there was a substance of truth in it and the Brahmanas wielded a dominant role in the royal court. Of course, their intellectual qualities and political wisdom gave them a commanding position. The king turned to them for advice and for the conduct of administration. The king carried on the administration of the state with the help and advice of the ministers. We have a long list of ministers who served under the Karnatas. The **RR** has devoted a chapter dealing with the different qualities that make a minister and also his functions (pp.10-13). In the state the supreme position no doubt belonged to the king who was advised by the Councillors about whose appointment Chandeswara has devoted a separate chapter. The Prime Minister of the Karnatas was known as **Mantri** or **Mahamattaka**. Both the Andhratharhi and Havidiha inscriptions tell us that the term **Mantri** indicated the Prime Minister (**CIB** – 124/5). Sridharadasa served as the Prime Minister of Nanyadeva and Gangadeva, while Ratnadeva was Nanya's another important minister. The family of Sridharadasa served under the Karnatas and the Senas and obtained the title of **Mahamandalika**. Ramaditya and Karmaditya served as ministers under Narasimhadeva, while Karmaditya also continued to serve under Ramasimhadeva. Devaditya was a minister under Saktisimha. Saktisimha's autocratic behaviour offended the Council of ministers and the result was that a Council of Seven Elders was appointed as a check upon the power of the king. During the time of Harisimhadeva, Chandeswara Thakur was a veteran politician and held the post of **Mahamattaka** and **Sandhivigrahika** for a pretty long time. Possibly he was the man behind the palace revolution during the reign of Saktisimha. He wielded sufficient political power till Harisimha attained majority. Three generations of the family of Chandeswara, Devaditya, his son Vireswara, and his son Chandeswara served as **Sandhivigrahika, Saprakrtya Mahavartika Naibhanika, Mahamattaka Sandhivigrahika** respectively under Harisimha. Chandeswara's brother Deveswara was also one of his ministers. The posts seem to have been hereditary in the families of the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas. The descendants of Sridharadasa and Ratnadeva continued to act as ministers till the time of Harisimhadeva. While the family of Sridhara continued to be called **Thakkuras** (indicating the feudal status), the family of Ratnadeva came to be known as **Choudhary** (as they came to be associated with the revenue administration since the time of Gangadeva). Suryakara Thakkur, a descendant of Sridhara, is said to have been the moving force behind Harisimha's measure of social reform. A complete genealogy of the family of Ratnadeva is yet preserved in the Panji maintained by the Kayastha Panjikaras of Mithila (copy of which is with the writer of these lines, a direct descendant of Ratnadeva). The Prime Minister wielded extensive powers in the state. These ministers used such high sounding titles as **Samanta, Mahasamanta, Maharaja, Mandalika, Mahamandalika, Mahamatya**, etc. They were powerful feudal barons and in that capacity they made princely gifts and constructed huge religious structures. Sridhara, Karmaditya, Devaditya, Vireswara and Chandeswara are noted for such constructions and gifts. We learn

from **Krtyaratnakara** that Vireswara after having stormed the enemy fort excavated a big tank at Dahivata, a prominent city and constructed a very high palace. He settled the Brahmanas and granted cities like Ramapura to the Srotriyas. Chandeswara offered **Tulapurusadana** after his resounding victories in Nepal. Vireswara also arranged for the daily meal of the destitute and the poor.

It appears that since the occurrence of the palace revolution during the time of Saktisimha, the Council of Seven Elders continued to wield sufficient powers with a view to check the recurrence of a similar event in the land of Mithila. Circumstances favoured them as Harisimha ascended the throne as a minor and as such the real political power remained vested in this Council. From the contemporary literary sources it appears that the importance of the **Mahasandhivigrahika, Mahamudradhikrta** and **Mahasarvadhikrta** had immensely increased. The extant meaning of the **Mudradhikrta** is not clear but it may be inferred that it referred probably to an office of the status of the Lord Privy Seal. The head of the Judiciary came to be known as **Mahadharmadhyaksa**. Vardhamana Upadhyaya is said to have been a **Dharmadhyaksa** under Gangadeva and Malladeva. During the time of Harisimha, Prime Minister Chandeswara held the portfolio of the ministry of Peace and War and he also united in himself the office of the Chief Judge or the **Pradvivaka** of Mithila. He seems to have presided over the court of Justice as the **Vivadaratnakara** describes him as a clever judge. His uncle Ganeswara presided over the Council of the feudatory rulers of Mithila. Since Ganeswara was the chief of the feudatories of Mithila, he assumed the title of **Maharajadhiraja**. Besides these, we have vague reference to Jateswara as the keeper of the treasury, Hardatta, in-charge of the transfer department and Laksmidatta as the keeper of the Seals. The importance of the idea underlying the transfer of officers was understood even by these rulers and in this respect they were much ahead of Shershah. The powers and responsibilities of the Government were vested in the Council which acted under the supervision of the king. Besides the king and the ministers, there were a number of officers and heads of the departments. The whole territory of Tirhut seems to have been under the control of one single unit, the lowest of which was a village.

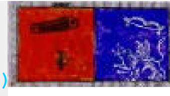
VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION: Village was the lowest unit of administration. The work of revenue collection was done through **Gramapati** and **Dasagramika**. Chandeswara throws a very interesting light on the working of the village administration. We have a reference to a **Gulma** consisting of three to five villages, **Gramapati** or **Gramadhipati, Vimsatimsagramapati, Sahasragramapati,** and **Rastra** (consisting of hundred of villages) (**RR** – 60). Every village had an elected Headman. The village heads were to be appointed in order of merit and efficiency (**RR** – 60). The whole system of administration depended solely on the stability and integrity of the village system. Social, economic, religious, legal and political matters were solved by the villagers themselves. All types of quarrel and litigations were referred to the village Headman, who, is unable to settle the matter, had to report it as a matter of duty to the next higher authority, and a similar process went on till it reached the highest authority (**RR** – 60). Thus the village Headman formed the core of the lowest administrative unit. The village system was the bedrock of the entire political structure of Mithila and this system continued unabated for centuries to come. All categories of village heads were paid by the king and the payment varied according to their rank and position. The villagers paid their taxes in kind and out of that the headman was paid. The mode of payment to different village heads was as follows:

i. Dasesa – Head of ten villages got as much land as he could cultivate with one plough;

ii. Vimsatisa – Head of twenty villages got as much land as he could cultivate with four ploughs;
iii. Satesa – Head of hundred villages got one full village; and
iv. Sahasradhipati – Head of thousand villages was given a city or a town. (**RR** – 61)

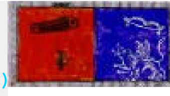
The central government maintained close contact with the village headman through regular correspondence and also through its own officers. There was a separate ministry in-charge of the village affairs. The minister in-charge of villages was known as **Snigdha** because he was thought to be very close to the king. Though the actual meaning of the word **Snigdha** is not very clear, it may be presumed that he was possibly appointed from amongst the members of the royal family. Since he was very close to the king, he has been called **Snigdha**. His main task was to look after the various grades of village officers and also to supervise that work. It was his duty to make known to the villages the royal policy and also to bring to the notice of the royal court news about villages. Like his proto-type of the Mauryan period, he acted as a Liaison Officer between the centre and the village. In so far as his duties are concerned, he may favourably compare with the modern ministry of Local Self Government. In Chandeswara's **RR**, there is a provision for a Ministry of the Rural Affairs under the charge of a minister. Its main purpose must have been to integrate the village administration with the central authorities and also to look to the needs of the villagers (**RR** – 61). The use of the expression **Tantritah** is indicative of the fact that the minister in-charge of the rural affairs enjoyed absolute powers in his sphere of activity. There was an officer called **Sarvarthachintakam** in every city or town. In the words of Chandeswara, **Sarvarthachintakam** was to those village officers as **Rahu** is to planets. In face of this clear expression of Chandeswara, it is not possible to agree with the suggestion of Thakur that the officers concerned correspond to 'the law-giving authority or justice of the modern times' (**TM** – 354). True, his presence 'struck terror into the hearts of the wrong-doers', but it must be interpreted in a different way. He was a powerful welfare officer who had the good of all in his mind. He looked to the performance of such rites and duties as were beneficial to the attainment of all ends of state. **Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksa** constituted the **Sarvartha** of a man as well as a state and a benevolent king always aimed at the realisation of that end. A similar officer was appointed during the reign of Ramasimha to look to the observance of the social rites. Since the office of the **Sarvarthachintakam** was very important, only persons of integrity and character were appointed. In his performance of duty, he seems to have been very strict and that is why he has been compared to a horrible planet. In each city or village, there was an officer of this cadre. He severely dealt with the anti-social elements of the time. In the **RR** (p.61), he has been given extensive powers. All these go to show that the village administration was thoroughly organised.

Even for the purpose of the revenue administration, village was the lowest unit. The whole kingdom seems to have been divided into a number of fiscal areas known as **Parganas**. A Headman or a **Choudhary** was appointed to each **Pargana** to collect revenue. The village administration was run on the lines of the **Panchayata**. There was a **Panchayata** in every village and was constituted on democratic lines. The village disputes were settled by these **Panchayatas**. The system continued for a considerably long period. These **Panchayatas** were held responsible for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in every nook and corner of the kingdom. A village police was appointed for every village. The police had to

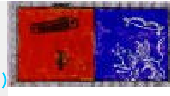
make daily report of all occurrences to the village headman or **Choudhary**. The village accounts were meticulously maintained and kept with thorough accuracy. The **Patwaris**, commonly known as village accountants, were entrusted with the work of maintaining village accounts. The Patwari was paid at the fixed rate out of the village fund (**ST** – 62). From the modes of payment to the various officers and village servants, it appears that there was much of feudal element in the administrative set-up. It would be going out of limits to compare this mode of payment with the **Mansabdari** system of the great Mughals as the latest writer on the subject would have us believe (**TM** – 353). Needless to say that feudalism was the basis of all social and political organisation of Mithila during the rule of the Karnatas, and also in the subsequent period. In Mithila, the village system acquired immense political importance during the Karnata period. Its importance is evident from the fact that Chandeswara has prescribed a separate ministry of rural affairs. The **Gramika** was a very powerful officer. During the period under review, we see that the official recognition for the purposes of a grant was withdrawn from the lower social groups and accorded to the Brahmanas who by this time were also the cultivating classes implying the introduction of an economic basis in the distribution of the village people. It is now the Brahmana ministers who now made land grants and not **vice-versa**. The question of the occupational basis was no longer there. The land-owning aristocracy wielded both political and economic powers while the tillers of the soil were rendered powerless. If the **Sarvarthachintakam** was really a terror to the evil-doers, it must be said that he was really a terror to those who tried to upset the then social order.

FEUDAL ORGANISATION: The feudal organisation of the whole social and political structure is apparent when we look to the epithets used by the ministers and courtiers of the Karnatas. From the introduction to the **Sugati-Sopana**, verses of the **Prakrita-paingalam** and the **Panchobh CP**, we learn that these ministers used high sounding titles as **Srimana, Mahamattaka, Maharajadhiraja, Mahasamantadhipati** (a title used by Nanya himself in the beginning), **Maithilabhuminathapatibhih, Mahamandalika**, etc. We have seen above that Ganeswara presided over the feudatory rulers of Mithila and that he was himself the chief of those feudatories. His son Ramadatta in his **Chhandogyamantroddhara** (Introductory Verse 1) calls his father **Mahasamantapatino**. It appears that the whole of Mithila during the latter part of the Karnata rule was divided into a number of small fiefs the lords of which met under the presidentship of Ganeswara. These feudal barons formed the cabinet or the Council of Elders of the Karnata rulers and the chief baron used to preside. The hereditary nature of the post of the prime minister is indicative of the fact that these feudal nobles had grown sufficiently powerful and had monopolised the most important posts of the state. They also acted as **Aide-Camp** of the kings. **Aide-Camps** were known as **Rajaballabha** and we find that Bhavaditya, a brother of Devaditya, was known as **Rajaballabha**. They not only kept the king within their confine but also controlled the various department of the state. They, for all practical purposes, guided the affairs of the state and had made the king virtually a titular head under their control. It is only for this reason that caste in politics had lost all meaning for Chandeswara. Needless to say that Chandeswara aptly changed with his time. Sovereign may be of any caste but it should be his prime duty to protect his subjects. The mention of a separate department of transfer as early as the fourteenth century AD is indicative of the fact that these feudal barons did not like to fix any officer at a particular place for indefinite period as that would jeopardise the interest of the feudal lords. The Karnata rulers of Mithila in that sense may be taken as a precursor of Shershah and rulers following him. To maintain their hold on the people and the government, these feudal lords made arrangements



for a ministry of Religion and the appointment of a new king was confirmed by this ministry which performed the ceremony according to the Vedic rites. The hold of religion on politics was a reality and Chandeswara attached much importance to it (**RR** – pp.70-74). The king was bound to hold meetings with the Councillors for the discussion of policy or **Mantra** (Ibid, 27-30). It has been pointed out by Chandeswara that necessary harmony among the ministers was a necessary prerequisite for the stability of a state. He has devoted a full chapter on the position and the status of a **Samanta**. The **VR** has also given a detailed list of the various social classes in Mithila during the rule of the Karnatas and has discussed the role of the **Samantas** in the political organisation. These **Samantas** had under them their own vassals and we learn from the **Prakrita-paingalam** that Haribrahma was a vassal of Chandeswara. For all battles fought or won, the barons used to take credit and that is also evident from Chandeswara's own writings where he takes all credit for himself. The secret of their strength was their efficient organisation.

DEFENCE AND FORTIFICATIONS: The Karnata kings paid due attention to the problem of defence and fortifications. Army was one of the seven elements of state in ancient India and Chandeswara has discussed at length the utility of the army and its different components (**RR** – 33-38). He has also envisaged certain measures for safeguarding the kingdom from apprehended invasions of the enemy. In this connection he has briefly enumerated the chief duties of the Commander-in-Chief or the **Senani** (Ibid, 39-41). The **Sandhivigrahika** was responsible for the organisation of peace and war. It was under this ministry that the Military Department was organised under **Senapati** and under him there were separate officers in charge of infantry, cavalry, elephants, etc. From the very inception of the Karnata kingdom, the problem of the protection of the state was an important subject with the Karnata rulers. They were surrounded on all sides by foes and as such they had to remain alert. They paid special attention to the construction of forts in different parts of their kingdom. Nanyadeva himself built a strong fort at Simaraongarh supported by stone pillars and this was further strengthened by the later rulers. When Dharmaswami, the Tibetan traveller, visited Tirhut in 1236 AD in the reign of Ramasimhadeva, he found that Simaraongarh was well fortified on all sides as by that time the Muslim incursions had been very frequent. The ruins at Bheet-Bhagwanpur give an indication of the existence of a fort and same is the case with the ruins at Balirajagarh. While the Bheet-Bhagwanpur fort is attributed to Malladeva, Mithila tradition believes that Gangadeva constructed a big fort at Andhratharhi which now lies buried deep in that village. Few pieces of stones and some **slokas** in **sardulavikrita** metre bearing the name of Gangadeva have been recovered from that village. The Karnata rulers always maintained a second capital, as a second line of defence. While Simaraongarh was the main capital, Gangapur Rajni, Darbhanga, Nanpur, Bheet-Bhagwanpur, Andhratharhi, Havidih, Harisimhapur, Malhad were some important outposts and served as temporary capitals. Sakkuri was founded by Sakrasimha because of its strategic importance. Like Gangadeva, Narasimha and Ramasimha also fortified their territories. Ferishta informs that the fort of the king of Tirhut was surrounded by seven ditches, full of water and a high wall and the Tughlaq king took three weeks to destroy them. The existence of a very strong fort at Tirhut is further supported by the author of the **MSS** of **Basatinul-uns**. Besides the main fort at Simaraon, there were fortifications at other important places and at temporary capitals, most of which have now been destroyed by the ravages of Kosi, Balan and Kamala. The **VR** also refers to the

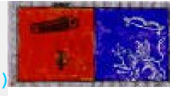


office of the **Purapati** and **Durgapala**. They were important officers of the military department and were in-charge of forts and fortifications.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

From a study of the history and the institutions of the Karnatas, it appears that the scope of the government not only embraced the secular affairs of the state but even extended to moral and religious spheres. From the very beginning of their rule, they maintained the rules of caste and religious orders in strict conformity with the Holy Scriptures. The old tradition of Mithila was strictly followed. There was no remarkable or revolutionary change in the policy of the state and they simply followed the time-honoured precepts and convention. They made endowments to the temples and other religious establishments. In spite of Mithila being an important centre of orthodoxy, the Karnata rulers were not intolerant. Though a supporter of Brahmanism, Ramasimha offered the office of the chief priest to the Tibetan Buddhist traveller Dharmaswami, who thankfully declined to accept the same. This is one of the best examples of their tolerance. While Dharmaswami received special treatment at the hands of Ramasimha, it must be said to his credit that he offered all facilities to all refugee Buddhist scholars of the time who had come over to this side for protection against the Muslim. Rules were framed for the guidance of the people in their religious and social observances. Ramadatta's **Vajasenayi-Vivahapaddhati** (**Dasakarma**) and **Mahadaanapaddhati** (on merits of great gift) were highly respected. The former work is a leading canon in Mithila up to the present day. Ramasimha was very particular in this respect and he made it a part of his administrative routine. He took special care in pronouncing new canons and appointed an officer in each village to adjudicate upon all questions arising from the working of these new canons of conduct. Harisimha's social reform formed a part and parcel of his general state policy. The appointment of the **Sarvarthachintakam** suggests that the state brought within its compass every aspect of the life of citizen. Mithila under the Karnatas did not lag behind other parts of India in gradually evolving an organised administrative system with a sound and efficient machinery. Certain important administrative and technical constitutional terms are available from the contemporary sources.

1. **Bhupala – VR –** Lord of the earth.
2. **Mandalika – VR –** Officer in charge of a **Mandala**.
3. **Samanta – VR** and **RR** and also in the contemporary **MSS –** Feudal Lord.
4. **Senapati – VR** and **RR** – Commander of the army.
5. **Purapati – VR –** In charge of a fort.
6. **Mantri – VR** and **RR –** Minister.
7. **Purohita – VR –** Religious head.
8. **Dharmadhikarana – VR** and **RR** and other contemporary literature – Judge.
9. **Sandhivigrahika – VR** and **RR** – Minister in charge of Peace and War.
10. **Mahamattaka – VR –** Prime Minister.
11. **Pratibalakaranadhyaksa –** An officer who possibly combined in himself some military functions and those of the chief of a secretariat but the actual meaning is doubtful.
12. **Santikaranika – VR** – Meaning not clear.
13. **Rajaguru** – **VR** – Possibly Royal Priest.



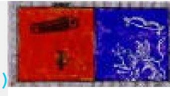
14. **Durgapala** – **VR** – Officer in charge of a fort.
15. **Thakkura** – In the various **MSS** – Baron.
16. **Sarvarthachintakam** – **RR** – Welfare Officer.
17. **Duta** – **RR** – Ambassador. According to Chandeswara, he should be versed in all branches of literature, talented, tolerant and patient (**RR** – 42-54).
18. **Gulma** – **RR** (p.60) – It ordinarily means a wood, fort and a police station. Fleet translated **Gaulmika** as superintendent of woods and forests (CII – III.52 fn.4). Dr U N Ghosal takes **Gaulmika** as Collector of Custom duties and refers to '**Gulmadeva**' of the **Arthasastra** in support of his view (Cf. Hindu Revenue System, p.292). According to Chandeswara, **Gulma** meant a group of three or five villages. It seems that **Gulma** was a small administrative unit in a group of three or five villages and was the centre of a police station. Gulmapati is also mentioned in the **Panchobh CP** and there it means the officer commanding a **Gulma** squadron.
19. **Mahapilupati** – Panchobh CP – Chief trainer of elephants.
20. **Mahasadhnika** – Do – Superintendent of military supplies.
21. **Mahaksapatalika** – Do – In charge of the Accounts and Records Department.
22. **Mahadharmadhikarnika** – Do – Chief Justice.
23. **Mahakarnadhyaksa** – Do – Chief of the Secretariat and in charge of Records.
24. **Vartinibhandhika** – Do – Digest writers.
25. **Mahoutthatasanika** – Do – Meaning not clear.
26. **Mahadandanayaka** – Do – Chief Judge, General or Magistrate.
27. **Mahasamantaranaka** – Do – Great feudatory ruler (?).
28. **Khandapala** – Do – Custom Inspector or Superintendent of Police. U N Ghosal regards him as a military official (**IHQ** – XIV.839) or Superintendent of Municipal Ward.
29. **Mahavyuhapati** – Do – Chief master of military arrays.
30. **Mahadhikarika** – Do – Chief Superintendent of Offices.
31. **Mahamudradhikari** – Do – Keeper of the Royal Seal.
32. **Ghattapala** – Keeper of the mountain passes.

Besides these, there are many other officers in the **MSS**, the **VR** and the **RR**. All these officers are known to us from various ancient texts and Chandeswara drew largely upon them. There is nothing new or original in the **RR**. His state was a **Karada** state. At places he has given his own views.

CULTURAL LIFE OF MITHILA UNDER THE KARNATAS

The Karnata rule in Mithila has left its permanent impress on her culture and literature. The Karnata rulers left no stone unturned to raise the cultural and moral standard of the people of Mithila. Various temples were constructed and wells and ponds were dug out in different parts of Mithila. State grants were extended to educational institutions and organisations.[234] A critical and analytical study of the **VR** reveals to us the life and condition of the people of Mithila under the Karnatas.

Mithila continued to be the centre of orthodox Brahmanical culture and the defence of such orthodoxy led to the development of **Nyaya** and **Purvamimamsa**. For the study of these two subjects, students and scholars from all parts of India flocked to Mithila. Just about the time of the Muslim conquest of Bihar,



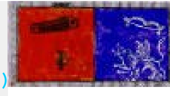
Mithila offered shelter to a large number of Buddhist scholars. Mithila, being comparatively free from foreign invasions, was in a position not only to give protection to a large number of scholars from the adjoining countries but also to devote much of her time in pursuit of learning.

The family of Chandeswara kept high the banner of **Smriti** studies. Sridatta, Harinatha and Bhavasasarman, Indupati and his pupil Laksmipati and others contributed much towards the development of this branch of literature. Padmanabhadatta started an important branch of a school of grammar, with his **Supadma** and its supplement which are still studied in the districts of Jessore and Khulna. Sridharadasa compiled his famous **Saduktikaranamrta**, while Jyotiriswara the earliest extant work in Maithili known as **Varnanaratnakara**. On Rhetoric and erotic, some of the most popular books were written by Bhanudatta Misra.

Ratneswara commented upon the **Saraswatikanthavarana**. **Kalikastotra**, a book on **Tantra**, was also compiled. Manuscripts of the **Bhagawata** and the **Visnupurana** were also copied. Sanskrit literature, in all its branches, found its full play. The advent of the Muslims was all the more responsible for the study of the Smritis with renewed vigour. It has been rightly pointed out that the strain on the cohesion of the Hindu society was fast reaching the breaking point and it was at this critical stage that the Brahmanas essayed and re-enforced the tottering edifice as far as possible. These **Smriti** works could preserve the individuality of the Hindu society.[235]

Mithila was the home of the **Navya-Nyaya**, which is an amalgam of **Nyaya** (Logic) and **Vaisesika** (the knowledge of substance). This amalgam of the two systems became prominent in the 12-13th century AD. According to these two systems, the origin of the world from the atom is common. These form a closely connected pair.[236] Neither of these two systems accepted the existence of God and their theology first developed in Udayanacharya's **Kusumanjali**, where God was regarded as a special soul. Later on, Bengal became the seat of **Nyaya** learning and Dr D C Sen has rightly pointed out that the civilisation of Bengal came from Mithila. **Vedanta, Nyaya, Mimamsa** and **Sankhya** systems had their beginnings in Mithila and O'malley has rightly said that 'the history of Mithila centres round ....the court engrossed in luxurious enjoyment of literature and learning.' During the three centuries that followed the Muslim invasion of Bengal, Mithila was a flourishing centre of learning after the decline of Nalanda and Vikramasila. Through the generous and active patronage of the ruling family, the Mithila school of thought made a permanent contribution to the development of the various aspects of Sanskritic studies in India. Its main contributions were in the fields of **Smriti, Nibhandas** and Philosophy. This period of intellectual activity in Mithila stimulated the revival of Sanskritic studies in Bengal and hence the history of Mithila during this period has an important bearing for an adequate understanding of the Bengali life and culture in later days.

In the field of art and architecture, we have practically no remains at our disposal except a few broken and scattered pieces of stone images, door frames and buildings. There has been neither scientific exploration nor excavation in any part of Mithila with the result that even some chance discoveries have been lost to us. Whatever specimens of art are there, they may be assigned to the Karnata period. The Karnata rulers maintained the black stone tradition of the Palas and the Senas. Mithila art was directly influenced by the Pala and Sena School and the existing remains bear testimony to this fact. The

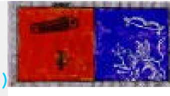


Andhratharhi, Bheet-Bhagwanpur, Bahera, Balirajagarh, Simaraongarh, Nanpur, Harisimhapur, Havidiha, Tilkeswar, Mathahi, Belwa, Parsarma, Birpur finds, etc., are all in black stone. All these places had the signs of the existence of big buildings. Images found in these places are the finest specimens of the Karnata art and sculpture. At Bhagwanpur, a set of two representations of man and woman in embrace on the door frame is nicely carved. The religious themes are endowed with worldly consciousness, the iconoclastic representation is vivid and we find its counterpart in literature, especially in the poetry of Vidyapati. Fine art continued to be cultivated with full vigour by the people of Mithila under the Karnatas. The images found at Ucchaitha, believed to be the home of Kalidasa, though without any foundations, Bahera, Kandaha and the Belwa door frames (Saran district) are some of the examples of the Karnata art. Temple architecture was a speciality of Mithila and that is why Spooner called it the 'Tirhut types of temples' (**JBORS** – II.121-134). Temples have been discovered from Bahera and Kandaha.

Nanya himself was a great master of singing. We learn from the **Sangeetaratnakara** of Sarangadhara that Nanyadeva was a popular writer on music. His commentary on the **Natyasastra** has been described by him as a **Granthamaharnava**, an epithet which is also found in the Andhratharhi inscription of Sridharadasa. His work has also been described as **Saraswatihrdayalankara**. Nanya has quoted from a number of authorities but he is chiefly indebted to Kasyapa, Matanga and Abhinavagupta. He has added much new material in his treatment of **Jatis** and **Ragas**, which is not found in Bharata's or Abhinava's work. He has given perfect details and examples in various prakrit tongues to suit high and low characters. After Bharata, Nanya is the only available writer who deals with this part of the subject. He is credited with having developed the popular **Ragas** in Mithila. The Maithila traditional music, **Nardiya**, influenced music in Assam and Nepal. We learn from Vidyapati's **PP** that Harisimha was a great lover of music. Mithila was the seat of the lyrical poetry and we see Umapati, in his drama, **Parijataharana**, has used the Maithili lyrical songs. The **VR** of Jyotiriswara refers to the existence of a poetic ballad, popularly known as **Lorika**, which is even today equally popular in Mithila. It was under the patronage of the Karnatas that after the classical language, Maithili was first to give vernacular dignity of literary vehicle in the whole of eastern India (**VR** – XX-XXI). Nepal was also influenced by the Karnatas. The institution of the Deccan Brahmanas as priest in charge of Pasupatinatha was probably a direct result of the Karnata connection (**JASB**.L. – XVI.186). The technique of Nepali drama was obtained from Mithila and through Nepal it went up to Assam. Jayasthitimalla brought some Maithila Brahmanas from Tirhut and on their advice divided the Newar society into a number of castes and guilds on the model of Hindu society.

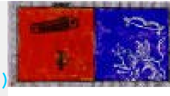
DECLINE OF THE KARNATAS OF MITHILA

The Tughlaq invasion of Mithila in 1324-25 AD sounded the death knell of the Karnatas who ruled over Mithila for about 225 years. After being defeated by the Muslims, Harisimha went to Nepal and settled over there where his family continued to rule for a pretty long time. The fort of Tirhut was stormed and it became a province of the Delhi Sultanate. Tirhut became the mint of the Tughlaq and came to be known as Tughlaqpur. It is difficult to say as to what happened to the Karnatas after Harisimha. Harisimha was followed by Matisimha, he by Saktisimha and the latter by Syamasimha.[237] They are said to have ruled in successive order.[238] Bakshi holds that Harisimha had a son named Bhairavasimha who did not occupy the throne after his father's death.[239] It seems that Harisimha's successors ruled over the low lying plains and the Terai area of Tirhut spreading from the borders of Champaran to the confines of



Purnea. On the mainland of Tirhut the Karnatas were replaced by the Oinwaras. It may be suggested that the successors of Harisimha continued struggling in Tirhut at least up to 1390 AD. Nrsimha of Ramadatta's **Danapaddhati**[240] seems to have been a successor of the local Karnata ruler or a small ruling independent chief. He was neither a son of Harisimha, nor the third Karnata ruler as has been wrongly supposed by some scholars.[241] He should be taken as Nrsimha II, either subservient to the Delhi emperor or an independent chief. It has been suggested that the authority of both Nrsimha II and Ramasimha II was limited to the neighbourhood of Simaraon.[242]

The political condition of Mithila seems to have been in a state of hopeless confusion and anarchy at the close of Harisimha's reign. From the introductory verses of the **Krtyachintamani** it appears that when Harisimha was in heaven, he was pleased to see Chandeswara's **Yajna** and the authors like Jiveswara and others being honoured. The most remarkable point here is this: that there is no mention of any living king. The glories described therein seem to be past history. It may be presumed that after Harisimha's departure there was chaos in Mithila and his successors continued struggling for supremacy in Tirhut. Vidyapati's **Kirttilata** clearly indicates that there was anarchy in Mithila for some time in the 14th century. For about thirty years after the fall of the Karnatas, there was no stable native government in Mithila. Harisimha's successors failed to achieve the old glory and tried their luck in Nepal with some success. The greatness of the Karnatas achieved under Harisimha was not to last long and proved illusory. The transitory success of Harisimha was nothing more than the last flickering of a light before its final extinction. The glory that was Mithila under the Karnatas was now a thing of the past. The Karnatas ceased to exercise any authority over the mainland of Tirhut after Harisimha, and for some time, they ruled side by side with the Oinwaras at least up to the year 1390 AD.[243] There is a slight but welcome reference to the fact that some Karnata ruler was ruling in Mithila in the 16th century AD in some **Nyaya MSS**[244] of that age. Like all other great dynasties of the past, the Karnatas seem to have passed out of history after the sixteenth century AD.



CHAPTER VIII

HARISIMHADEVA OF MITHILA

A RE-ASSESSMENT OF FACTS

I. RE-EXAMINATION OF THE QUESTION OF THE KARNATA CHRONOLOGY AND THE DATE OF HARISIMHADEVA

In his learned article entitled 'King Harisimha of Mithila' (JBRS – XLIII, pp.1-6), Dr R C Mazumdar has raised certain issues with a view to elicit criticism before he finalises the same for inclusion in his chapter on the history of Mithila in the 'History and Culture of the Indian People' (Vol. VI), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavana, Bombay. Dr Upendra Thakur's reply to Dr Mazumdar's contention (JBRS – XLIII, pt. II) does not show any improvement on the problem. The chapter on Mithila, contributed by Dr Mazumdar, published in the above volume (Vol. VI), shows that he has not changed his views even when he had before him the typed script of my article under print here. The purpose of the present paper is not only to reply to certain issues raised by the learned scholar but to place an exhaustive treatment of facts relating to the Karnata dynasty, especially Harisimhadeva, before the world of scholars. It is evident from Dr Mazumdar's paper that he was possibly not aware of the publication of Luciano Petech's 'Medieval History of Nepal' (Rome, 1958), nor of the colophon of a **MSS** of the **Bhattikavyam** (preserved in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal) and of the **MSS Basatinuluns** (now preserved in the British Museum Library). In my article on the 'Karnatas of Mithila' (ABORI – XXXV, pp. 91-121), I had given a detailed account of the Karnata king Harisimhadeva, but I feel that my own findings need some revision here. Even Thakur's **History of Mithila** leaves the problem as it was. Singh's 'History of Tirhut' is nothing more than a copy of Manmohan Chakravarti's article in the JASB (NS – XI, 1915). The only new source brought to light by Dr Mazumdar is Isami's **Futuh-salatin**. I shall come to it later on. Dr Mazumdar has mainly raised three important issues: (1) Date and chronology of Harisimhadeva, (2) Harisimhadeva and Nepal, and (3) Harisimhadeva and the Muslims. In my re-assessment, I have confined myself to these three issues.

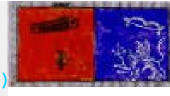
In the inscriptions of Pratapamalla (IA – IX, pp.184, 188-189) there is one more king between Saktisimha and Harisimha and he is named Bhupalasimha. This king does not find any mention in the Mithila tradition except one quoted by Chanda Jha. While in the Nepal **Vamsavalis**, Harisimha has been shown as a successor to Ramasimha, in the inscription referred to above, Harisimha is shown as a son and successor to Bhupalasimha. The inscription further states that Harisimhadeva settled in Nepal. While the **Vamsavalis**, as they are, are confusing, the Nepal inscription approaches very near to the Mithila tradition. According to the Mithila tradition, Saktisimha had a son named Bhupalasimha, but on that

very score it is very difficult to say whether Bhupalasimha ruled or not. According to the **Vamsavali** of Kaiser Shamser (VK) and the **Muditakuvalayasva**, Karmasimha ruled between Saktisimha and Harisimha (Petech, 195; for the **VK** text, Cf. Ibid, p.217). In the **VK**, Harisimha is described as the son of Karmasimha. The genealogy is as follows: Ramasimha – Bhavasimha – Karmasimha – Harisimha.

No literary colophon or epigraphic evidence or even the traditional account bears testimony to the rule of Bhupalasimha, whereas there are some materials for the study of Harisimha's reign. While the inscription of Pratapamalla simply gives the genealogy of the Karnatas, the **Vamsavalis** give us the list of the rulers of Mithila. Dr Mazumdar has rightly admitted that 'we have no good grounds to disbelieve' the Pratapamalla inscription (JBRS – XLIII, p. 2). On the basis of a solitary colophon, it has been shown that Harisimhadeva was seventh in descent from Nanyadeva (PIHRC – 1951, p. 255) and this statement is in keeping with the evidence furnished by Pratapamalla's inscription (JBRS – XLIII, p. 2; Cf. H P Shastri, '**Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit MSS in the Asiatic Society Library**', Vol. VII). In that case it may be presumed that Bhupala predeceased his son and successor Harisimha. Bhupalasimha does not seem to have reigned at all. Chronologically Harisimhadeva was the sixth ruler of the Karnata dynasty, though he may be seventh in descent, either viewed from the **VK** or the Nepal inscription. Here we have to bear in mind that while the Nepal **Vamsavalis** do not mention Sakrasimha, the Mithila tradition omits Bhupalasimha. A reign period of twelve to sixteen years has been assigned to Sakrasimha, while Bhupalasimha is altogether omitted (**MD** – 61 ff; **MTV** – 119 ff; **BMI** – 484). The only plausible explanation to this confusing discrepancy is to be sought in the fact that since Bhupalasimha predeceased his son, he could not find a place in the Mithila tradition though he is mentioned in the genealogical table.

Dr Mazumdar has placed Harisimhadeva in the last quarter of the thirteenth century 'somewhere about 1285 AD' (Op. Cit. – p.2; Cf. ABORI – XXXV). According to the colophon of a **MSS** of Srinivasa's commentary on the **Bhattikavya**, Harisimhadeva was ruling in LS 159 (1279 AD) (Cf. H P Shastri, '**Catalogue of the Asiatic Society MSS – VII**', p.66, No. 5067 – **Subhamastu**. **Srimat Harisimhadeva rajye. L. Sam 159 Phalguna vadi 1 Sanau, Om Hermbaya namah**). Even this piece of evidence is not free from doubts. The Tithi corresponds to the 1st March 1279 which was a Wednesday and not a Saturday. This is the earliest date known to us about Harisimhadeva. In considering the date of Harisimhadeva, we have to take into consideration the chronology of the Karnatas of Mithila afresh. It is an admitted fact that there is no unanimity with regard to the chronological set up of the Karnatas. The various sources give us the following details:

MITHILA TRADITION	**NEPALESE SOURCES**
1. Nanyadeva – 37 (MD)	50 (IA – XIII. 414)
- 36 (MTV; HML; BMI)	48 (Petech, 194) on the VT (1097-1145)
Thakur does not commit anything.	
RKC – 50 years (1097-1147; Cf. CB – 127)	



2. Gangadeva – 12 (MD)	41
- 14 (MTV; BMI)	30 (Petech, 194) on the VT (1145-1175)
- 41 (HML)	
RKC – 41 (1147-1188; CB – 127)	
3. Narasimhadeva – 52 (MD, MTV)	39
- Do (HML, BMI)	30 (Petech) on the VT (1175-1205)
RKC – 39 (1188-1227; CB, 127)	
4. Ramasimhadeva – 86 (MD)	58
- 92 (MTV)	
- 62 (HML)	40 (Petech, 194) on the VT (1205-1245)
- 52 (BMI)	
RKC – 58 (1227-1285; CB, 127)	Petech's view is rendered impossible by the discovery of Dharmaswami's account.

[Ramasimhadeva was born on March 18, 1183. He is mentioned in connection with a religious ceremony on Samvat 364 Jyestha Krsna Pratipada or May 24, 1244.

Accepting the reign period assigned by Petech, we can assume that he ruled up to 1267 or up to the maximum of 1278 if any credence is given to the colophon referred to above.]

5. Saktisimha or Sakrasimha	No reign period is allotted in this source.
- 16 (MD)	
- 12 (MTV; BMI)	
6. Bhupalasimhadeva	
No reign period.	Do.
7. Harisimhadeva – 20 (MD; HML)	
- 28 (MTV; BMI)	28
RKC – 1285-1324 (CB, 127)	
RCM – 1285-1324 (JBRS – XLIII)	

Thakur – 1303 or 1307 to 1324

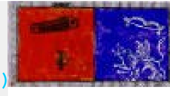
(**Mithila**; p.279)

I have assigned reign-period to only five rulers of the Karnata dynasty (**CB** – 127).

Petech hints at the possibility of a civil war after Ramasimhadeva (p. 195). The list after Ramasimha and before Harisimha is so doubtful that it is very difficult to set up a chronological table. We find one Virasimhadeva ruling in the Tirabhukti on November 18, 1260 (JBORS – XXI. 37). The calculation made by Petech is not open and above board. There is no mention of Virasimha in any tradition and Petech believes that 'oscillation in the names of Ramasimha's successors seem to a period of civil war' (Petech; 195). According to the Nepalese sources, between Saktisimha and Harisimha, Bhupalasimha or Karmasimha ruled. The **VK** (as quoted by Petech) constructs the chronological set up of the Karnatas in the following manner: In the Saka 1019 (=1097 AD) Nanyadeva ascended the throne. He was succeeded by Gangadeva, he by Narasimhadeva, he by Ramasimha, he by Bhavasimha, he by Karmasimha and he by his son Harisimha in Saka 1205 (=1283 AD). In the Sanskrit **Vamsavali** in possession of Professor Tucci (**VT**), the chronological order up to Ramasimha is as usual and then it stops (Petech; 198). That is why, Petech stops at Ramasimha and hints at the possibility of a civil war after him. The **VT** gives two dates, the establishment of the Karnata dynasty in **1097** and the beginning of the reign of Harisimha in **1283**.

With this reconstruction of the Karnata chronology by Petech we have to examine some of his findings. Petech has suggested that Ramasimha ascended the throne in 1205 AD. In face of the eye-witness account, this view is untenable. The Tibetan traveller, Dharmaswami, tells us that Ramasimha had ascended the throne seven years earlier than the time of his visit (1234-36) and that actually comes to 1227 – a date fixed by me in my earlier paper (Vide, **ABORI** – XXXV). Two dates are thus definitely established in the chronological set up of the Karnatas, viz., 1097 as the date of the foundation of the dynasty and 1227 as the date of the accession of Ramasimhadeva. I am inclined to believe that Harisimha either ascended the throne in 1283 or was coronated in that year as described in the **VT**. The popular belief is that he became the king of Mithila when he was a minor. In this connection we have to take into account another verse and that is the date on which the Panji system was introduced in Mithila. According to the Mithila tradition the Panji system was introduced in Saka 1216 (=1294-5 AD) (Vide, **BMI**; p.494 ff). There can be no doubt that he instituted this social custom after he became the king of Mithila. Another datum with regard to the date of Harisimhadeva is his re-entry into Nepal in 1324-25 AD.

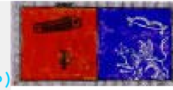
The most curious but noticeable point in the history of Mithila after Ramasimhadeva is the mention of Sakti or Sakrasimha in the Mithila tradition as a ruler and the name of Bhupalasimha. Both these kings have not been assigned any reign period in the Nepalese tradition while one more king of the name of Virasimha is said to be ruling in Tirabhukti in 1260 AD. Since he does not seem to have been lineally or directly descended from Nanyadeva, it may be assumed that Virasimha was possibly ruling in that part of Tirhut of which Malladeva was the founder (For Malladeva, see my paper in the **ABORI** – XXXV). Similarly Saktisimha also does not come directly as a lineal descendant of Ramasimha in the **Vamsavali**. Sakrasimha might have been a descendant (indirectly he was, if Virasimha be accepted as a descendant



of Malladeva) of Virasimha. While it is not possible to agree with the contention of Petech on the issue of civil war after Ramasimha, the probable explanation seems to be that Sakrasimha was ruling in the eastern part of Mithila and Harisimha in the paternal territory of Simaraongarh. If Ramasimha's son was Bhavasimha, he possibly predeceased his father. Bhavasimha does not find any mention in the tradition. The confusion, thus created after Ramasimha, seems to have got mixed up with the tradition which has been so faithfully preserved with minor differences. Another possibility is that Sakrasimha of Malladeva's line might have taken advantage of this confusion but was ultimately routed by Harisimha and the chroniclers here confused the issue. The fact that he adopted autocratic attitude, which offended his nobles, is indicative of an extraordinary event. In no case can be now push Ramasimha beyond 1279, the date of the colophon of the **MSS** referred to above and even if Karmasimha be accepted as his grandson, it should be presumed that he was overthrown by Sakrasimha, whose extraordinary powers offended his nobles. He seems to have remained satisfied with Sakkuri (in Darbhanga district) and the neighbouring areas, while Harisimha remained entrenched in the vicinity of Simaraongarh. The problem would remain a mystery until the descendants of Malladeva are brought to light. The events related by Mulla Taquia are not be rejected outright, as Dr Mazumdar is inclined to do (**JBRS** – XLIII, p.2). The Mulla does not belong to a school of traditionalist; rather he was a recorder of facts and he must have based his accounts on some source now lost to us. The date of Alauddin's invasion of Tirhut or his contest with Sakrasimha need not stand in our way of fixing the date of Harisimha. My contention is that Sakrasimha belonged to a different line and even when he tried to join the two houses of the Karnatas (the house of Gangadeva and Malladeva) the people refused to acknowledge him as the king of Mithila, as in that case the commentator of the **Bhattikavyam** must not have mentioned the name of Harisimha in LS 159 (=1279 AD). The earliest limit of the reign of Harisimha may be fixed at 1279 and if the **VT** is to be relied upon, his coronation might have taken place in Saka 1205 (=1283 AD). Tradition would have us believe that Harisimha was a minor when he ascended the throne and keeping in view the possibility stated above, this seems to be reasonable. A long reign of about fifty years is not improbable for a king under whom three generations of ministers served, viz., Devaditya, Viresvara and Candesvara, and it is not unreasonable to agree with Dr Mazumdar that Harisimha had 'ascended the throne during the last decade of the 13th century' (op.cit., p.1).

The above argument shows that there is a substantial agreement amongst all the authorities about these names. There are some minor variations and that is natural. The important variations are – the omission of Saktisimha and the addition of Karmasimha in the prologue of the drama **Muditakuvalayasva** and the addition of Harideva by Wright and Bhagwanlal. Harideva is mentioned in the Mithila tradition by Umapati in his **Parijataharana-nataka** (Vide, my article '**Sanskrit Drama in Mithila**'; **JBRS** – XLIII, p.28 ff). Dr H C Ray identified Bhavasimhadeva with Bhupalasimha (**DHNI** – I.206; Levi, 11-220). There is again a surprising agreement in the total reign period which comes to 219 or 226 in spite of the variations in the assignment of the reign period to individual rulers. In view of the chronological set up suggested above, I would like to reconstruct the Karnata chronology in the following manner :

Rulers in Succession	**Rulers whose authenticity is doubtful**
1. Nanyadeva (1097-1147) – 50 years	xxxx



17 (**Annals**, BORI)

2. Gangeyadeva (1147-1188) – 41 years	Malladeva
3. Narasimhadeva (1188-1227) – 39 years	xxxx
4. Ramasimhadeva (1227-1279) – 52 years	Virasimhadeva
(Bhavasimha and Karmasimha possibly did not rule.)	
5. Harisimhadeva (1279-1325) – 46 years	Sakti or Sakrasimha (1279-1301)
--------------------------	[During which period he possibly came into
228 years	conflict with Alauddin Khalji, and after that
	Harisimha seems to have joined the two
	houses under his own authority.]

Harisimha seems to have conquered the territory of Sakrasimha after the latter's death and the foundation of Harisimhapur in Bahera Polce Station is possibly reminiscent of that fact. Here we have to keep in mind that Duff's **Chronology of India** (p.134) has both Saktisimha and Bhupalasimha. Bhagwanlal, who also takes only five reigning kings, has a total of 216 years. Thus calculated at the present estimate it comes to as follows:

HML: 1097+219 = 1316; falls short by nine years (1325 being the datum).

MTV: 1097+234 = 1331; overlaps by six years.

MD: 1097+223 = 1320; falls short by five years.

Nepalese sources: 1097+216 = 1313; falls short by twelve years.

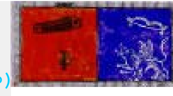
Petech: 1097+148 = 1245; (only up to Ramasimhadeva).

RKC: 1097+228 = 1325; the conquest of Tirhut by Tughluqs and the disappearance of Harisimhadeva.

Thakur has not worked out any chronological datum of his own. His chronogram is confused and sometimes misleading. He has either accepted the one view or the other and has not cared to examine critically any one of them. My calculation, though not totally, to a great extent, comes nearer to Petech's calculation though I have my own differences with his findings which are bound to occur in the present state.

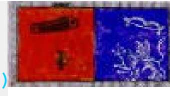
II. **HARISIMHADEVA AND NEPAL**

The second issue raised by Dr Mazumdar is the re-entry into Nepal by Harisimhadeva (op.cit., p.5). Opinions are divided on this issue too. Thakur is of opinion that Harisimha 'fled from Tirhut, invaded



Nepal and settled down for the rest of life' (**Mithila**; p.283-4). Mazumdar takes the event as Harisimha's 'entry into Nepal after the end of the conflict.' Criticising Thakur, Mazumdar observes, 'It is very unlikely that a king deserting his people and kingdom ....would be in a position to subdue a country like Nepal. ....It is more reasonable to suppose that he had already conquered Nepal in his heyday of his power and glory. ....The resources of Nepal enabled him to resist the Sultans of Delhi in the Jungle.' (Op.cit.; p.5) In my earlier paper, I had shown that Harisimha's authority in Nepal 'seems to have been shaken by repeated Muslim incursions. ....In 1314 Candesvara conquered Nepal for him' (**ABORI** – XXXV). The great and redoubtable minister claims that he conquered Nepal for his master and that he was the first Brahmana from outside to touch the celebrated deity of Pasupati (**Vivadaratnakara**, p.676; **Krtyaratnakara**, p.4). In spite of this boast of Candesvara the fact remains that this invasion did not give Harisimha a preponderant position in Nepal and we find a Thakuri prince ruling there in 1318, however weak he might be. It was after his retirement to the hills that Harisimha devoted his energy solely to consolidate his position.

In view of these conflicting evidences, let us consider the question afresh. While chances for the Karnata expansion anywhere in India were practically nil, Harisimha seems to have tried his luck in Nepal in the first quarter of the fourteenth century AD. The invasion also took place in the early years of his reign and that is evident from the following text of the **VK** (p.10) – **samvat 411 Magha Masa Tirhutiya Bhatagrame pravista samvat 431 Magha Masa Tirhutiya Lalitagrama pravista. Rastre ati santapah danda prachyate patra srstabandhanam mahatpira. Nepale juvarajini viramadevinam somesvaranimam devakrte purah cangudevalayakriam divaja** – (Quoted in Petech, pp.215-6). According to the **VK**, the Tirhut ruler invaded Nepal and took Bhatagaon in 1291 (=Magha 411) and in 1311, the Tirhutiya came again and took Patan (=Magha 431), and looted the whole country. Anantamalla was the ruler of Nepal between 1270 and 1319 and these invasions were by the descendants of Nanyadeva (Petech, 103). If the **VT** date of Harisimhadeva is to be relied upon, it appears that a few years after his accession, he led an expedition against the Mallas of Nepal since they had grown powerful and had possibly shaken the Karnata authority. From Simaraon, the Karnatas had claimed loose sovereignty over the local princes of Nepal valley, since 1097, which in those days seems to have occupied a much smaller area, lying between the basins of the Kosi Gandaka, 20 miles in length and 12 miles in breadth, watered by the river of Bagmati (**DHNI** – I.185-6; Levi – II.62-68; **IGI** – XIX. pp.25 ff). The invasion of 1311 might be connected with the one for which Candeswara takes the credit. What might have been the cause of these repeated invasions of Nepal by the Tirhut ruler? It seems that the Mallas after stabilising themselves in Nepal were extending their authority in the Terai area and by the time of Anantamalla, they had conquered a good portion of Terai. P C Mukerji, in course of his exploration, discovered a graffito, dated 1234. Levi took it to be of the **VS**, and suggested the extension of Malla power in 1177 AD. Petech has not only corrected the reading but has also discovered a new one which gives the name of Ripumalla, dated 1234, and his son and successor Sangramamalla. The date has been referred to the Saka era and it comes to 1312. The Mallas extended their power up to Nilagriva in the area. In the last quarter of the thirteenth century, the Mallas were split into two branches at Patan and Bhatagaon. The feudal chiefs were getting the upper hand. This chaotic situation in Nepal facilitated invasion from Tirhut. D W Wright has also shown that this was a period of Matsya-nyaya in Nepal (Wright, pp.167-77; Regmi, 150). Since the earlier invasions do not seem to have given Harisimha a



position of influence, his minister Candeswara conquered and consolidated his authority in Nepal which was further strengthened by Harisimha himself after 1325. Candeswara performed **Tulapurusadana**. He was a very powerful minister and had a protégé named Haribrahma who composed a panegyric on his patron (pp.184, line 8; p.107, line 2; p.187). Therein Candesvara is called a mighty minister and a man of name and fame, and Maharaja (p.186). Candesvara's victory in Nepal seems to have given Harisimha a political foothold in the valley.

The traditional verse regarding the flight of Harisimha has different readings in different texts. The only common thing is date, **Saka 1245**. The **MSS** in the India Office Library has the following variant:

Durdaiva desitapathathagirim vivesa (Vide, Keith. **CSPMIO** – II. 1414, No. 7775.)

The **VK** and the **VL** has the following variants:

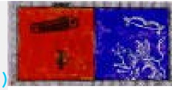
L.1 – Banabdhiyugma (**Bahu** in Mithila tradition) **Sasi** (not in Mithila tradition) Samvat Sakavarse.

L.2 – Pausasya Sukla Navami (Dasami ksiti sunuvare in Mithila tradition) Ravisunuvare.

L.3 – No difference.

L.4 – Durgaiva daiva viparita girim pravesa (the Mithila tradition has Durdaiva darsita pathe girima vivesa).

The date corresponds to December 7, 1323, which was a Wednesday and not a Saturday (**POC** – II. 564). From a colophon of the **MSS Jatisamgraha**, it appears that the introduction of the mysterious goddess Taleju in Nepal is attributed to Harisimha (**CSPMIO** – II.1411, No. 7767): **Karnnata Sanjanagaraddaharisimha-devo nepaladesamanayat sajalesu** (sic, for Taleju, maju). Its temple in Khatamandu is the highest in the town and its shrine in the darbar of Bhatagaon is inaccessible to the Europeans. Nepalese tradition ascribes this installation to Harisimhadeva (Wright, pp.174-5). Bendall, though disbelieving the story of this invasion altogether, admits Harisimhadeva and his ancestors as almost titular kings of Nepal even if they really claimed sovereignty over the valley of Nepal (**JASB** – LXXII, Part I, 1903, p.14). The question of invasion does not arise here. Harisimhadeva simply entered the valley of Nepal. The date suggested by Mazumdar is **Saka 1247**, but in the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to agree to it unless further evidence is forthcoming. Mazumdar's contention would remain tentative and should not be taken as an admitted fact. It may be that just on hearing the march of the Sultan (march from Delhi to Lakhnauti must have taken sufficiently long time in those days), Harisimha entered Nepal and after re-enforcing his army came to face the Sultan when he returned from Bengal. His retirement to the hills was compelled by fate and circumstances. Mazumdar says that Harisimha was 'forced to abandon his own kingdom and settle in Nepal which had already acknowledged his suzerainty' (op.cit., p.6). Petech has suggested a solution to this problem by taking recourse to an old chronicle which says, 'Harisimha expelled from Simaraon, came to Deopatan and received many riches ....in 446 in Magha Sukla 3 (=January 7, 1326).' This seems to be one year too late in comparison with the Muslim sources, but we may suppose that, before his arrival to Deopatan, he

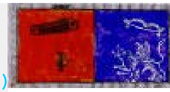
 

had wandered in the Terai for several months. ....But in any case this mistake is very old, as no manuscript gives variant for the stanza (Petech, p.112).

We have seen above that the **VK**, **VT** and **VW** simply refer to Harisimha's entry into the hills. He is respected for the introduction of the mythical goddess Taleju. Petech believes that after his entry into Nepal, Harisimha disappears from history and his end is unknown (Petech, 113) but in the same strain he says, "....His son (Jagatasimha), of course, would have taken his place amongst the highest nobility of the land. This would explain why the latter chroniclers have made Harisimha an ancestor of the royal family and a king of Bhatagaon, although he never ruled there. ....The link between the later Mallas and Harisimha can be sought only here and nowhere else." (Petech, 116) Jagatasimha married Nayakadevi and his rule at Bhatagaon is indicative of the fact that Harisimha must have established his power there. To reject outright the rule of Harisimhadeva in Nepal, in spite of so many evidence, is impossible. How could then Jagatasimha 'enjoy kingship as a son of Harisimha'? (Petech, 115) The absence of any reference in the Nepal chronicles to Harisimha might be explained in this way: Since his entry in Nepal meant entrenchment of power in the area, he was considered an outsider and hence ignored; but they could not ignore the installation of Tulaja Devi. His sovereignty in Nepal is evident from the inscription of Pratapamalla (**IA**, op.cit., 189) which definitely says that he settled in Nepal. In the present state of our knowledge, it is not possible to accept that he was connected with the indigenous dynasty of Nepal valley, rather it would be more appropriate to suggest that the chiefs of Nepal ruled their territory as his vassals, otherwise there was no reason why the **Vamsavalis** should have mentioned his successors as rulers of Nepal (**HCIP** – V.48). Even Petech has himself admitted that Harisimha received immense riches at Deopatan.

III. **HARISIMHA AND THE TUGHLUQ CONQUEST OF MITHILA**

In all the Muslim sources referring to the invasion of Tirhut by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, with the solitary exception of Mulla Taquia, the name of the ruler of Tirhut is conspicuous by its absence. The storming of the fort of Tirhut is an admitted fact. All accounts agree to the fact that the ruler of Tirhut escaped to Nepal. Candesvara says that the earth was flooded by the **Mlecchas** and we learn from the **Sugati-Sopan** that Harisimha had some contest with the king Gauda. Jyotirisvara's **Dhurtasamagama** would have us believe that Harisimha won victory over the Sultan. Chakravarti identified the Sultan with Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (**JASB** – XI.412; N S), but that is impossible. Mazumdar has rightly pointed out that 'the exulting references to victories over the Muslims can hardly apply to that episode. ....Harisimha scored successes against the Muslims ....during the last days of the Mamluk Sultans after the death of Balban' in 1287 (op.cit.,p. 2). The recent discovery of the Maheswara Arabic Inscription of the time of Ruknuddin Kaika'us (dated 1291-2 AD) supports this view. If my above contention about Sakrasimha belonging to Malladeva's branch be accepted, it is fair to surmise that his kingdom was small and he was already awed by Alauddin's inroad and placed his services at the disposal of his Khalji master. Taking advantage of the weakness of the Karnata kingdom, the Bengal Sultan, Ruknuddin Kaika'us extended his authority up to the belt of the Gandaka. There is likelihood of a contest here and it is possible that the stiff resistance of the ruling Hindu chiefs of Mithila, headed by Harisimha, proved futile. It seems that Firuz Altigin cried halt to the advancing armies of the Hindus and erected a big structure on the bank of Gandaka for the protection of his power. Firuz was the Governor of Ruknuddin. The assumption of lofty



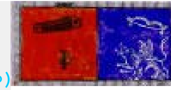
titles by Firuz shows the attitudes of Balbani line towards the Khaljis. No doubt the limit of the Bengal kingdom was extended up to the Gandaka region in north Bihar. This is the earliest Arabic inscription discovered in north Bihar. Possibly Harisimha's contest with this powerful governor and his ultimate success in resisting the expansion of Muslim power beyond Gandaka led the author of **Sugati-Sopana** to think of Harisimha's contest with Gauda and provided Jyotirisvara with material for his drama. The **Krtyaratnakara** verse 4 suggests that Harisimha subdued his enemies. Verse 10 suggests that Viresvara after having stormed the enemy fort, excavated a big tank of Dahivata and granted Rampur to Srotriyas. Candesvara is also credited with having rescued the earth submerged in the flood of the **Mlecchas**. Jayaswal refers to the defeat of the Bengal Sultan for which credit is given to Ganesvara in his **Sugati-Sopana**. With Ghiyasuddin Tughluq we come on a surer footing of sober history.

While discussing the tughluq invasion of Tirhut, Dr Mazumdar has taken into consideration all authorities except Mulla Taquia and the **Basatinul-uns**. There is a striking agreement between Isami and the **Basatinul-uns**. These two accounts do not say anything about the fall of the fort of Tirhut and the consequent capture of its ruler. A summary of the **Basatinul-uns** is given here: "After having conquered the kingdom of Lakhnauti ....Ghiyasuddin proceeded towards Tirhut with a view to announcing God's **Kalma** and **Sheriat** of the Prophet on this side. The Rai had a very strong army and fort. He was not very powerful but too proud of his might ....had insulted the previous kings ....and was not at all submissive. When he came to learn of the victory of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, he began to tremble. When the grand army of the Sultan attacked him, he found himself in danger. It was now unsafe to stay in the place which once gave him power and pelf and therefore he decided to leave the place. The drum of retreat was beaten. He rode on a horse and took to his heels. ....He took shelter in the mountains. ....To make necessary administrative arrangements, the Sultan stayed there for some time. A large number of people were killed. The people of this area who declared their loyalty to the Sultan were rewarded. They were offered land and forest. When the Sultan became satisfied with the arrangement, he returned to Delhi." (Folios – 9, 10, 11, 12)

Here we have to bear in mind that the author of the **Basatinul-uns** was a member of the royal suite and journeyed along with Ghiyasuddin from Tirhut back to Delhi. This manuscript is a tale (British Museum – Add – 7717) compiled by Muhammad Sadre Ala Ahmad Hasan Dabir, an hereditary servant at the Delhi court, and a secretary of the royal chancery. This work was composed in the first year of the reign of Muhammad Tughluq. It has been said in this manuscript that the king left his kingdom in a state of hopelessness. Those, left in the fort, were killed by the army of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq and the Emperor accorded courteous treatment to those who readily submitted without any opposition. Hence in the study of the Tughluq invasion of Tirhut, no evidence can be more reliable than that of the **Basatinul-uns**, since the writer himself belonged to the party. Here we also to bear in mind that Isami was not very favourably inclined towards the Tughluq rulers, and hence a comparative estimate of these two sources will enable us to arrive at a truth. True, the writers, Isami and Barni, are 'silent regarding any success of Muslim arms', but how can we explain the presence of Ahmad in Tirhut? He must have been left with some purpose. Harisimha must have fought successfully against the invader and there is no room for any doubt about it. Isami, if read with the **Basatinul-uns**, gives a clear picture. According to the **Basatinul-uns**, Ghiyasuddin handed over the charge of administration to the native people. We learn

from different sources that Ahmad was left as imperial representative in Tirhut. In face of these two contemporary accounts, it is not possible to accept the view that Harisimha was arrested. Both the accounts are unanimous on the point that the king of Tirhut escaped. The fact remains that Harisimha must have fought against the Muslims even after the retirement of Ghiyasuddin; but to connect it in any way with the **Dhurtasamagama** episode will be wrong. The **Dhurtasamagama** episode refers to the fact that Harisimha was able to recover his kingdom after the tide was stemmed and it was after the expulsion of the Muslims that this comedy was staged. After Ghiyasuddin's invasion, Tirhut never recovered its independence and Harisimha never returned as he settled himself in Nepal. The silence of Barni, Yahya and Nizamuddin does not pre-suppose the return of Harisimha after the return of Ghiyasuddin, nor the event of the **Dhurtasamagama** be connected with it. Tughluq conquest of Tirhut could be possible without any long and protracted struggle and hence their silence. The Tughluq conquest, no doubt, sounded the death-knell of the independent Karnata kingdom. Nor is there any evidence to show that the Muslims invaded Nepal before the second half of the fourteenth century and even that invasion was temporary. It is not possible to agree with Durga Prasad about the extention of Alauddin's power in Nepal as he has based his argument on the evidence of a single coin (**JASB** – 1929; Numismatic Supplement, pp.37-38). Thakur has made the confusion worst confounded by suggesting 'that Harisimha conquered Nepal is a clear demonstration of the fact that Nepal was by then lost to some other, probably the Sultan of Delhi, Alauddin Khalji' (**Mithila**; p.285). He should have remembered the fact that in 1324, Alauddin was not the ruler of Delhi nor was Nepal under any Muslim king, because we find the Mallas ruling over there. Thakur has simply relied on Jayaswal. Harisimhadeva entered Nepal and not conquered it, a task which was already performed by his minister between 1311 and 1314. Had Nepal been invaded by Alauddin or any other Muslim ruler after him, the event must have been mentioned in some account. Candesvara uprooted the kings of Raghu progeny in Nepal and not any Muslim. Mazumdar believes that even after retirement to the hills, Harisimha offered 'stubborn resistance' and 'inflicted some defeat upon the imperial army' (op.cit., p.5). This assertion needs further investigation before being accepted as final. A different account has been given by Mulla Taquia who refers to the arrest of Harisimha and his consequent release by Muhammad Tughluq. Professor Askari has attached some importance to this episode (**Current Studies** – 1954; p.12). Allan holds that Mohammedans destroyed the fort of Tirhut, sacked its capital, Simaraon, where Harisimha was ruling (**Cambridge Shorter History of India**, p.118; **CB** – 167).

Viewed critically the reign of Harisimhadeva forms a landmark in the history of Mithila. From the political standpoint, his reign was bristling with hectic activities and within a short compass of four decades, he played no insignificant part in the history of north-eastern India. His achievements in the field of social reform are remarkable. His stormy political career has left a permanent impress on the life and culture of the people of Mithila. His court was thronged with scholars.

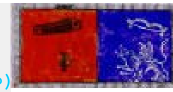


CHAPTER IX

EARLY MUSLIM INVASION OF MITHILA

Tirhut, the country west of Mahananda, was comparatively free from the Muslim conquest for a considerable period. According to a comparatively later source – 'Bakhtyar Khalji appears to have conquered Mithila west of Mahananda' (**Riyaz**, p.47, fn.). Mulla Taquia is of opinion that Bakhtyar first conquered Mithila and then proceeded to Bengal (**Maasir**, Patna, 1946). Blochman believes that Bakhtyar took possession of south-eastern Mithila (**JASB**, 1872). Mulla Taquia gives us definite information, with dates, about Bakhtyar's march into Tirhut on his way to Bengal in AH 599 (=1201-2 AD) along with the names of the Karnata rulers of Mithila (**Annals** – XXXV.91 ff). The Mulla holds that the third ruler of the Karnata dynasty, Narasimhadeva (1188-1227), was under Laksmanasena of Bengal and was forced to be a tributary of Muhammad Bakhtyar (Ikhtyaruddin is said to have raided into Mithila; **CHI** – III, 42). Bakhtyar firmly held Lakhnauti, Tanda, Tajpur, Ghoroghata, Barkabad, and the eastern most limit of Mithila, i.e., Purnea. Hence in the face of above facts, it is not possible to agree with the findings of Mr Chakravarti, who says, "During the 13th century, Mithila generally escaped the deluge of Mussalman inroads. The Muhammadans on their way to Lakhnauti, marched from Oudh via Bihar and did not try to pass north of the Ganges (**JASB** – 1915; 407)." The recent researches have proved facts contrary to the above statement. It is obvious that a portion of Tirhut, no matter whatever be the size, came under the control of the early Muslim invader. It might have been a sort of loose sovereignty as is evident from the fact that the latter rulers had to make fresh conquests.

Besides his authority in greater part of south Bihar, Bakhtyar perhaps held the river tracts on the north bank of the Ganges from the mouth of the Gandaka river to that of the Kosi. Since Kosi in those days did not extend beyond Purnea it should be clearly understood here that his authority must have been limited to that area. Portions of north Munger and Bhagalpur and Purnea might have been under his sway, as these areas fall under the boundary indicated above (i.e., between the mouths of the river Gandaka and the Kosi). Purnea was the eastern boundary of Tirhut. The Tirhut king, Narasimhadeva, paid tribute to Bakhtyar simply to protect his kingdom against further onslaught and consequently ultimate ruin. Professor Askari believes that since Ali Mardan was allowed to pass or cross Kosi in north Bihar, hence the whole area must have been under the Muslim domination. His conclusion does not stand verified by facts. **Diyar-i-Kosi** was the frontier outpost on the Kosi side. There is no exact evidence to show that Bakhtyar took complete possession of Mithila and whatever reference, about its being tributary to Bakhtyar we have, is based on the solitary evidence of Mulla Taquia. The question of domination at the beginning of the first wave of Muslim invasion is inconclusive at this state though the

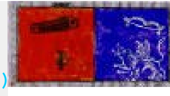


fact of conquest cannot be denied. Bakhtyar must have come through the side of Rajmahal and crossed the Kosi in the district of Purnea or even further east near Birbhum.

Local traditional sources point to the contact between the kings of Mithila and Delhi. According to Vidyapati's **PP**, the ruler of Delhi ruled from sea to sea, and he was helped by two young princes, Narasimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty and Chachikadeva, the Chouhana (**GPP**, Tale 4; Cf. My article, '**Vidyapati's PP**: An Important Source of India's Political History'; **JOT**, I. Pp 13 ff). I have identified this Sultan with Muhammad Ghori. It has been asserted that Narasimhadeva went to the court of Muhammad Ghori and fought for him (for a different account, see **Mithila**, February 2, 1953). The good relationship between Narasimhadeva and Muhammad Ghori might have facilitated the path of Ali Mardan, if we are to believe Askari's assertion (**CS**, 1954, p. 7; for local tradition, Cf. **MTV**, p. 115). "He could not have been allowed to pass unmolested through an unconquered and hostile region." It may be pointed out here that there was no question of any hostile region, as the people, in those days, had little concern over such issues like the defence and allied matters. The fact remains that Bakhtyar had made tributary to himself the kingdom of Mithila without hampering its independence. It was in the spirit of friendship that the ruler of Mithila might have allowed Ali Mardan to cross the Kosi.

Bakhtyar embarked on Tibetan expedition when there were already in existence independent Hindu kingdom of Kamrupa, the unsubdued kingdom of Mithila between the Kosi and the Gandaka, the Sena power in Vikramapur and the eastern Ganga empire of Orissa. At this time Ali Mardan Khalji was entrusted with the task of watching the eastern frontier, while Hussamuddin Khalji was entrusted with the defence of western march in the direction of Oudh and Tirhut. Hussam is said to have ruled the entire tract from Rajmahal hills to the lower course of the old Kosi, the accepted boundary between the kingdom of Mithila and Lakhnauti (**SHB**, II; pp. 9-10). The Kosi, on the side of which Iwaz received Ali Mardan Khalji, coming from Delhi, was the boundary of Bakhtyar's territory (**Riyaz**, p. 47). It is not known as to what happened to Bakhtyar's kingdom after his death – whether it passed on to Delhi sultanate or to the kingdom of Lakhnauti. The sources are conflicting and hence the difficulty. Bakhtyar's Tibetan expedition was a total failure and this gave respite to the ruling Hindu dynasties of eastern India. The soldiers of Bakhtyar stood demoralised and he was murdered by Ali Mardan in 1206 AD. Even his (Bakhtyar's) son, Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad, who held fiefs between the Ganges and the Son, raided into Bihar and Tirhut. Had Tirhut been completely subdued, there was no necessity of fresh raids into the territory.

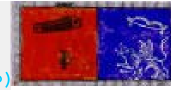
Ikhtiyaruddin, after various raids and plunders, appeared before Qutubuddin. The fact, that Ali Mardan was appointed governor, shows that the conquests of Bakhtyar passed silently within Sultan Qutubuddin's authority. Bengal and the whole of north-eastern India did not prove to be a bed of roses for the rulers of Delhi. Since the advent of Muslim conquest and even after the occupation of Bengal by the Muslims, the eastern states did not easily accept the unquestioned sovereignty of Delhi. While there was sufficient scope for ambitious princes, both Muslim and Hindus, to raise their heads as independent rulers, the already existing kingdoms of Mithila, Kamrupa and Orissa, left no stone unturned to preserve their independence. The very existence of the kingdom of Mithila was under permanent threat of being occupied, sandwiched as it was between Oudh and Lakhnauti. The absence of modern means of communication, in those days, prevented these ambitious states from being united in the name of a



common cause or danger. These Hindu rulers had not yet taken for granted the establishment of Muslim rule in India, and that is why they opposed till the last. The lack of suitable means of communication, coupled with the internal strife on account of their vain feudal concept of glory, stood in their way of progress or in the way of their unity against the successive inroads.

GHIYASUDDIN IWAZ: The exit of Bakhtyar created fresh avenues and opened the way for those ambitious adventurers who cast coveting eyes on the nearby territories. The independent kingdom of Mithila was an eyesore to the ruling chiefs of Lakhnauti, who never gave up their coveting eyes on this proverbial granary of Bihar. Qutubuddin's governor of Oudh, Rumi, was ordered to march to Lakhnauti and in 1207, he crossed the river Kosi where Hussamuddin Iwaz hurried to receive him and placed his services at his disposal (**Annals**, XXXV, 109). We know that Ali Mardan was made the viceroy of Lakhnauti by Qutubuddin. His treachery was well-known to the Khalji nobles of Lakhnauti and before his departure he recruited adventurous Turks and crossed in 1210. Iwaz advanced to the banks of Kosi to receive him (**JASB**, 1873, p. 349). He restored the political unity of the Muslim principality and openly assumed the title of Sultan and exacted tributes. Hussamuddin Iwaz Khalji, who supplanted Ali Mardan, extorted tribute from the neighbouring countries of Jajnagar, Banga, Kamrupa and Tirhut (**RAMT**, I, 86; Dr H C Rai holds that the claim seems to have been rather vague and put in by way of praise; Cf. **Dynastic History of Northern India**, Vol I, 374; Cf. **JASB**, 1908, p. 157; 1915, p. 407). So far as Tirhut is concerned, the account stands confirmed by the statement of Mulla Taquia, who says that Narasimhadeva continued to send the agreed tribute to Bengal up to the time of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji. This policy of paying tribute enabled him to keep Mithila internally free. Anyway, we are not aware of the exact nature of Iwaz's rule (1213-1227) in Tirhut (**Annals**, XXXV, 109H). This much is certain that Iwaz's Sultanate consisted of Lakhnauti, Barbakabad, Ghorghata, Tajpur and Purnea. After re-annexing south Bihar, he pushed his frontier up to the Gandaka in North Bihar. The Hindu raja of the Kosi tract followed the policy of '**Vetasivrtti**' with regard to the Muslim rulers (**SHB**, II, 29). The evidences hitherto, at our disposal, show that Tirhut sent offerings to Iwaz (**ED**, II, 319). The weakness of the one was the opportunity for others. The instability in political life created chances for those who wanted to fish in the troubled waters.

While we have no definite information about the actual state of affairs then obtaining in north India, there are scholars who pass judgment on things uncertain. Dr Kanungo, in his **resume**, has observed: "The old Karnataka kingdom of Mithila was about this time (1213-1227) breaking into fragments, after the death of Arimalladeva, and these princes in despair of holding their possessions in the plains hemmed in between the Muslim provinces of Oudh on one side and the territory of Lakhnauti on the other, were seeking compensation in the valley of Nepal. The ruler of eastern Tirhut could not but come within the sphere of influence of Lakhnauti." Elsewhere I have discussed the futility of such assertions (**Annals**, XXXV). It has to be pointed out here that Arimalladeva was not the king of Mithila, during the period referred to by Kanungo; nor was there any king of that name in Mithila ever. Askari, while wriring on the Turco-Afghan period (**CS**, 1954), did not look to that statement of Kanungo, which is confusing. There is no doubt that Iwaz made a bid for overlording over the eastern provinces. This excited the fury of Illtutmish, who sent forces against Bihar to wrest it from Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji.



ILLTUTMISH AND THE CONQUEST OF BIHAR AND TIRHUT: The Delhi Sultan, himself, appeared with an army, with the intention of conquering Bihar and Bengal in 1225 AD. The contemporary historian, Minhaj, says, "....The august Sultan, on several occasions sent forces from the capital towards Lakhnauti, acquired possession of Bihar and installed his own Amirs therein." It is said that the progress of the Sultan was arrested at some time of Bihar and a treaty was concluded between the two. Iwaz is said to have sent to Sultan Illtutmish thirty-eight heads of elephants and seventy thousand tanqas, in cash, as presents and acknowledged his authority (**RAMT** – I, 86-87; According to **TN**, 30 elephants and 80,000 of rupees). **TN** shows Darbhanga as a part of Illtutmish's empire. Ghiyas was brought into obedience. Illtutmish established sicca and khutba in his own name and returned to Delhi (**TP**; p. 46). Illtutmish succeeded in separating Bihar from Bengal and placed Allauddin Malik Jani in-charge of Bihar. The departure of Illtutmish emboldened Iwaz who expelled Jani from Bihar. Mulla Taquia informs us that the Tirhut king Narasimhadeva helped Iwaz in conquering Bihar. It appears that some sort of alliance between the two chiefs of eastern India existed and both of them were decidedly opposed to the extension of Delhi's expansion in the east. It was natural because both of them were enjoying the fruits of independence in their respective kingdoms. Whenever the question of opposition to the Delhi Sultanate came up, it seems that the Hindu kingdom of Tirhut and Muslim ruler of Bengal used to combine on such occasions.

The expelled Governor of Bihar, Malik Jani, joined Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, who was busy with suppressing the Hindu rebels of Oudh. Only two years after his expulsion (624 AH, i.e., 1227 AD) Jani brought Nasiruddin Mahmud (eldest son of the emperor) from Oudh to the frontier of Tirhut and concentrated large forces there. At that time Iwaz was busy with the conquest of east Bengal. Iwaz was defeated and killed. Nasiruddin Mahmud shifted the residence to Lakhnauti. He died soon (1229 AD) and Malik Alauddin Jani (a Shahzada of Turkestan) was put in charge of the government of Bengal, while Malik Saifuddin Aibak was made the governor of Bihar. I do not find any ground to agree with Dr Thakur, who relying on the **Riyaz**, observes, "Mussalman Bengal kingdom in pre-Mughal times included for the most part the whole of north Bihar." (**TM**; p. 398) His statement on p. 389 in the same vein is unconvincing and confusing. He contradicts himself by his own statements later on. Facts, at our disposal, prove to the contrary.

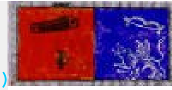
Narasimhadeva, in order to save the integrity and independence of his kingdom, apologised to Illtutmish for his alleged complicity with Iwaz. He, by his successful policy, succeeded in maintaining the independence of Mithila. On the authority of Mulla Taquia, we can say that Tirhut still continued to be an independent kingdom and any contact with the Muslims, either in the shape of alliance or subordination, if any, was due mainly to diplomatic necessity. In view of these facts, it is difficult to give any credence to Dr Kanungo's statement (**SHB** – II; 22/23) which seems to be his own invention without any foundation. Narasimhadeva ruled into 1227 as an independent king and was succeeded by his son Ramasimhadeva who had a very long reign. The independent status of the Karnata kingdom cannot be questioned on any score, though occasional raids and other disturbances, every now and then, disturbed its peaceful working. By no stretch of imagination, we can bring it under the Bengal kingdom in pre-Mughal times. The mention of Darbhanga, Tirhut and Bihar in the list of conquests made by Illtutmish, and separation of Bihar from Bengal under him is an important event of immense political

importance. Illtutmish, one of the greatest rulers of Indo-Muslim history, realised the importance of having a separate administrative unit for Bihar. Though his rule could not last long, it created an event of great importance in the sense that later Muslim rulers kept a separate state of Bihar for administrative purposes. Illtutmish led an expedition against Lakhnauti (627 AH) to punish Ikhtyar Khalji, alias Balka, the usurper. Aibak was replaced by the last Shamshi Governor of Bihar (630 AH) Tughril Tughan, Illtutmish died in 1236 AD.

TUGHRIL TUGHAN (1236-1245): Tughril Tughan legalised his authority, as Governor of Bihar, by procuring a formal recognition of status by Sultan Reziya (his titles, as known from his Bihar Inscription, were **Ghyas-al-Islam**, **wal Muslimin Mughis-al Muluk was salatin Abil-Fath Tughril-as-sultani**). From his Bihar inscription (dated 640 AH), it appears that he was a man of lofty ambitions. He made successful raids into Tirhut which yielded him rich booty but no submission.... (**SHB** – II; p. 46). He followed a policy of aggression, led an expedition into Orissa and extended his rule up to Kara Manikapur in Oudh. As a Governor of Oudh, Tamar Khan invaded all eastern tracts including Tithut and carried off immense booty. He was, then, sent to Lakhnauti to help Tughan in repelling the Oriyas (**TN**, Persian text, p. 247; Cf. **Riyaz**, p. 77 fn). As a Governor of Bihar, Tughril had to make raid into Tirhut. This shows that Tirhut king strengthened his position during the time of Rezia Sultana. It is asserted that Tughan Khan conquered and captured the Karnata kingdom (**Mithila**, February 2, 1953) and imprisoned its king. It is further pointed out therein that, in lieu of his brave services, the Karnata king was later on released and respectfully sent to Darbhanga by Sultan Allauddin Masud as a king. The kingdom was restored and the Tirhut king was to pay his tax direct to Delhi (**Riyaz**, p. 74, fn; Cf. **CS**, 1954). If Narasimhadeva was the king, said to be captured, the whole question of the Karnata chronology has got to be revised afresh. Regarding the sources, we know that there is a great dearth and even the text of Mulla Taquia has passed through so many hands that sometimes its authenticity comes to be questioned, specially at a place where other sources are available. Both the **TN** and the **Riyaz** are unanimous on the point that Tughan made an inroad into the country of Tirhut from Lakhnauti and acquired much booty. Nowhere do they say that he completely conquered it and captured its ruling chief.

Though Minhaj does not mention the name of the ruling king of Mithila, it is certain that it was none else than Ramasimhadeva. Askari has confused this king with one who was ruling in 1390 (**CS**, p. 10 fn. For correct identification see **Annals**, XXXV, 110-112; and **JIH**, XXXIV, pp. 321-327). Ramasimhadeva succeeded in maintaining the independent status of Mithila. He was an important personality of his age and this is evident from a newly discovered work from Tibet (Vide, **Account of Dharmaswami**). Dharmaswami stayed with Ramasimhadeva at Simaraon and his description of the fort is marvellous. Dharmaswami admits that Ramasimha was pressed on all sides by the Turuskas and had, therefore, given special attention to the strengthening of his fort. It thus appears that Ramasimha was an independent ruler, though hard-pressed under the circumstances. Regarding his date too, what Askari calls 'difficulty' is no difficulty at all if we scientifically study the sources.

THE REIGN OF BALBAN: The drama of the Delhi court was moving with extreme rapidity and revolutionary changes were taking place. In the east the province of Bengal was a problem and the signs of rebellion were not out of sight in Oudh. In between lay the independent kingdom of Tirhut, a headache to both east and west as, in a sense it was an anachronism in the then political set-up of



northern India. The rise of Balban to power at Delhi marked a turning point in the history of the slave dynasty, as he not only subdued the rebels but also strengthened the kingdom of Delhi. During his reign, Ulugh Khan in 1253 advanced as far as Bishanpur on the confines of Tirhut and returned with great spoils to the royal camp (**ED** – II; p. 375). The rise of Balban to power had emboldened Mughisuddin to seize the master-less province of Oudh. By 1256, Balban had driven out its rebellious governor, Malik Masud Jani, and had harried the province as far as the frontiers of Tirhut (**SHB** – II; p. 52). After the imperial army had left, Mughisuddin attacked Oudh. Tirhut, in those days, is mentioned separately, hence one ruling over Bihar, should not be taken necessarily as a ruler of Tirhut. The Karnatas were ruling in Tirhut during the period under review. The Muslim sources further testify to the fact that a portion of bigger geographical unit, **Diyar-i-Bangala**, had till then, remain independent, because we find Balban advising Bughra Khan to exert himself in the conquest of that area. Whether this is to be identified with Darbhanga or not, is a problem of Tirhut history. The area aroung Garhi Pass (Teliagarhi), was the gateway to Bengal and might conveniently be called **Diyar-i-Bangala** or gateway to Bengal. As a part of Garhi was in the district of Purnea, the area may be regarded as a part of a eastern kingdom of Tirhut. Since the route to Purnea was through Darbhanga, it has possibly been called **Diyar-i-Bangala, Duar-i-Bang** or Darbhanga. Possibly this is the only key to the solution, so far as the name of Darbhanga is concerned.

Balban separated Bengal from Bihar. Bihar remained loyal to Delhi and was placed under imperial Governor. Lakhnauti was also made a province of Delhi empire, but Balban on account of his preoccupation with the Mongols, could not keep a vigilant eye on the far-flung province of the east. Sultan Mughisuddin Tughral (1268-81), instead of acknowledging his authority, mobilised his army and advanced to Bihar (**EIM**, 1909/10, p. 113; Cf. **Munger Inscription of Balban** of 677 AH). He issued coins and caused Khutba to be read in his own name. The first expedition against him was organised in 1278 under Malik Turmati, governor of Oudh. Tamarkhan Shamshi and Malik Tajuddin also joined him. The imperialist forces crossed the Sarju and advanced by way of Tirhut till their progress was arrested somewhere between Tirhut and Lakhnauti (**TMS**, p. 30-31; **TFS**, B-83). The imperialists were defeated.

Mulla Taquia does not make any mention of Balban in his fragmentary account of Tirhut. The imperial army might have simply passed through Tirhut, leaving its status intact. While the reigns of Illtutmish and Rezia have been discussed threadbare in Mulla Taquia's account there is nothing about the reign of Balban. Mithila probably did not attract the notice of imperialists whose only ambition was to bring Lakhnauti to book. The probability of Ramasimhadeva's neutrality cannot be precluded. There is nothing to prove that 'the natural boundaries of the land kept the enemies at bay' as Thakur holds relying solely on Chakravarti (**TM**, p. 272-73). He contradicts himself by another statement on page 402 (Cf. **JASB**, 1915, p. 407-08). There are innumerable instances to show that the Muslim army, on way to Bengal, passed through Tirhut and vice-versa. Why the imperialist army preferred this route of 'the land that presented formidable obstacles'? It was not the natural difficulty that saved Mithila's independence, but the **Vetasivritti** which was responsible for its independent existence till its final conquest in 1324. Again in 1279, the governor of Oudh, Malik Bahadur led an army against Mughisuddin. Bahadur also followed the same old route by way of Tirhut to Lakhnauti. He was also severely defeated. Then the Sultan himself marched in person. Mughisuddin was defeated and killed.

BUGHRA KHAN AND RUKNUDDIN KAIKAU'S: Prince Nasiruddin Bughra Khan was left as the governor of Lakhnauti in 1282 and he ruled the province for about six years, that is, up to 1287 AD. When he heard of his father's death and consequent election of Qaiqubad to the throne (1287), he proceeded with a large army and entered the province of Bihar with a view to occupy Oudh. (The account is preserved in Amir Khusrau's **Qiran-us-sa'dain**). It seems that he followed the north Bihar route. Nasiruddin marched against him to enforce his own claims and advanced as far as the banks of Gogra in Sarkar Saran. Here he was met by his son at the head of the imperial forces, and some lengthy negotiations ensued. A picturesque account of the event has been preserved in the Muslim chronicle (**Riyaz**, p. 88-89). Since it was the hottest part of the year, the soldiers foamed at the mouth from excessive heat. The upshot was that the father and the son were reconciled. Nasiruddin was permitted to keep Bengal (Ibid, p. 88-90; Cf. **SB**, p. 48-50).

Nasiruddin was succeeded by Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikau's (1291-1301). He was acknowledged as the suzerain of Bengal and a portion of north Bihar. The Lakhisarai inscription (**EIM**, 1917-18, p. 8 ff) of the time of Ruknuddin is of great importance in so far as our history is concerned. From it we learn that, a) Bihar, which had become a part of Bihar, now again attained a separate status; b) it contains the names of great Khans and of Ikhtiyaruddin Firuz Altigin as Sultan and Ziauddin Ulugh Khan, the governor and deputy governor of Bihar respectively; c) it does not mention the then Delhi sovereign Alauddin Khalji, but records the allegiance to Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikau's of Bengal; and d) assumption of lofty titles by the Bihar governor shows (**CS**, 1954, p. 9) the attitude of the Balbani lines towards the Khaljis. The recent discovery of the Maheswara inscription by me of the same governor is one of the earliest Muslim inscriptions discovered in Bihar, and confirms the claim of Firuz Altigin. One should mark the significance of the words on the Maheswara inscription '**Hisn- i-Haseen'** (impregnable fortress) (**Annals** – XXXVI; p. 163 ff).

From the Maheswara inscription, it is evident, that Bihar, at least up to the districts of Munger and Begusarai, formed a part of Kaikau's dominion. We have seen above that Iwaz had pushed his frontier up to the Gandaka in north Bihar and from the present record it appears that Bughra Khan or his successor Kaikau's extended the limit of the Bengal kingdom in Bihar up to the area. Probably it was Bughra Khan, who, on his march towards Oudh, had done it and that was later on confirmed by Ruknuddin. Here again, Mulla Taquia is silent about this episode. The extension of Kaikau's power in north Bihar, just a year or so after his accession, amply demonstrates that he was not a weak ruler. The assertion of Sir Volsley Haig that Kaikau's owed allegiance to Alauddin Khalji does not stand (**CHI** – III; p. 261). According to Yazdani, the high sounding titles of Firuz Altigin indicated that the relations between Delhi and Bengal were sufficiently stained. The authority of Firuz seems to have been unquestionable in Bihar. The high sounding titles of Firuz in the Lakhisarai and Maheswara inscriptions embolden us to infer that Bihar, no matter whatever its size, both north and south up to a certain region attained a separate status from that of Bengal. It does not seem to be very unnatural when we take into consideration the events that had occurred on the demise of Balban. The governor of Bihar did not lose opportunity in asserting his right and secured for himself, as well as for Bihar, the independent status. Here the study of Firuz's titles is interesting. He is called Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah after he took

over the Government of Lakhnauti. He appointed Tajuddin Hatim Khan to the Government of Bihar. There can be no doubt that he continued to administer the area, once ruled by Firuz Altigin himself.

When all these events were going on, the Tirhut chiefs were maintaining their independence, though the size of their kingdom was being reduced gradually. The Maheswara inscription definitely proves that the Muslims were in possession of that part of Tirhut in 1291-92. Sakrasimhadeva was ruling in Mithila. He is said to have been a friend of Alauddin Khalji. The contemporary literature points to the various successive Muslim raids into the kingdom of Tirhut. We know little about the reign of Sakrasimhadeva whose reign period is also uncertain. Tradition makes him closely connected with the Khaljis of Delhi. A slight reference to Muslim invasion of Tirhut has been preserved in the account of Mulla Taquia. Perhaps it was during the reign of Alauddin Khalji (in 1297 AD or 697 AH).

TIRHUT DURING THE PERIOD OF KHALJI IMPERIALISM: There are no epigraphic or other records to show the extension of the Khalji rule in Bihar or specially Tirhut. Here we have to rely on Mulla Taquia who is the only authoritative guide. From the Mulla we learn that four battles were fought against the rulers of Tirhut till the time of Sakrasimhadeva. In the first two, the Maithila king defeated, near about Maqbara, the army of Alauddin Khalji. The second battle was fought at Sakkuri, said to have been founded by Sakrasimhadeva. In the third battle, fought in 698 AH, the Mithila king was arrested. According to Mulla's account the Khalji's defeat near Maqbara (Darbhanga) was serious. In this night attack, the Muslims suffered a lot. Alauddin Khalji sent help under Razi-ul-mulk Mahmud Iwas to the Muslim captain Shaikh Ismail as a result of which the Tirhut king was defeated and sent as a captive to Delhi (**MT**; Cf. **MTV**, p. 121; Jha, here, believes that the incident took place during the last days of his reign). The Mulla further informs us that Sakrasimhadeva was appointed commander-in-chief of the Khalji army when Alauddin marched against his Hindu enemies (Taquia's account is confirmed by Bakshi in the **BMI**, p. 484-487; Prof Askari has expressed natural doubts about the identification of Ismail. Since Mulla's account has passed through various hands, such error is possible. The contents of Mulla's account regarding Khalji's connections with Tirhut may be taken as correct and we have to rely upon it until further evidence is forthcoming. Cf. **CS**, 1954, p. 11). Sakrasimha fought against Rana Hammirdeva Chauhan of Ranathambor and thereby gained the favour of Alauddin Khalji. The main strength of Sakrasimha lay in the touchstone of his minister Vireswara (**BMI**, p. 486-7. He associates the touchstone tale with Alauddin. For touchstone and the Tughlaqs, see p. 495-6).

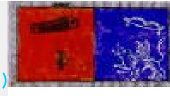
Mithila tradition preserves an account of the alliance between Alauddin Khalji and Saktisimhadeva (**MTV**, p. 119. In his **Krtyaratnakara**, Chandesvara calls Devaditya as **Hambiradhvantabhanuh**. Devaditya is said to have been honoured with the title of **Mantriratnakara** by Alauddin Khalji). In the history of medieval India, Alauddin's conquest of Ranthambor constitutes a landmark because he selected it as the first state for trial of strength with the Rajputs on account of its proximity to Delhi. Vidyapati also refers to this episode in his **PP** (tale no. 2. In this connection Thakur says, 'these literary evidences hardly find support in the statements by the contemporary historians'; **TM**, p. 276 fn). It is true that there is not much of truth in these tales, but on examination of contents, it appears that Vidyapati used some solid materials before him for the construction of this story (Cf. My articles in the **JOT**, I; No. 4). Mulla Taquia's reference to the close collaboration between the Tirhut king and Delhi Emperor cannot be rejected outright as a pure fiction. The Tirhut king is said to have gone to Alauddin's court with his

minister Devaditya and Viresvara. Chandesvara's mention of Hammir cannot be rejected outright as he himself was one of the important personalities of the time and a participant in the then political life. His statement should have some weight in the assessment of the period from the historical point of view. Mulla Taquia refers to financial assistance rendered to Alauddin by the Tirhut king Saktisimha (**Mithila**, February 9, 1953).

Faristha says that Alauddin conquered the whole of Bihar (Briggs, I, p. 366). According to Amir Khusrau, Alauddin Khalji, after Karra, departed towards the garden of Bihar 'to dye that soil with the blood as red as tulip' (**ED**, III; p. 543). In the light of Mulla Taquia and the insistence of Mithila tradition regarding the independence of Mithila, it is fair to maintain that Tirhut succeeded, with all means, to preserve its independent status (**BMI** makes a mention of Hammir episode but does not make any reference to the invasion of Mithila). Tirhut was one of many such states which maintained their independence against the imperial might of Alauddin. We know that Hindus still remained powerful rulers in the Deccan, in Tirhut, in Jajpur, and Gondwana (**MMT**, p. 79). The fact that Bengal Sultan's authority extended up to Gandaka in Begusarai district (Bihar), the very heart of Tirhut, might have forced the Tirhut king to court friendship with the Khalji Emperor, seems plausible in the present state of our knowledge than any other conclusion. Alauddin's imperial strategy needed a fillip in eastern India as Bengal was hostile. The trial of strength between Alauddin and Tirhut, as shown by the Mulla, and the consequent friendship between the two are indicative of the fact that the imperialist realised the necessity of securing the alliance of this Hindu state against the Chouhans in the west and also for keeping the Bengal ruler at bay. The Tirhut king, in return, succeeded in maintaining the independence of his country. The good relationship between Tirhut and Delhi was certainly a factor to be reckoned with by both. The fact remains that unusually big number of raids into the territory of Tirhut now became a reality and we have a reference to such activities in contemporary literature. Any source confirming Mulla Taquia will throw more welcome light on this period of history.

In view of what has been said above, we can agree with Professor Askari in his observation on the period under review. The learned Professor says, "....whose (Bihar) rulers acknowledged allegiance to Bengal, either in loose subjection to, or in a state of rivalry with, and in independence of, the Delhi sovereigns from the time of Muhammad bin Bakhtyar Khalji down to the time Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's invasion of Bengal through Tirhut in 722 AH" (=1324 AD. Cf. **CS**, 1954, p. 10). This is all the more true of Tirhut than any other part of Bihar, parts of which had already come under the direct sway of the Muslims. Traces of independent Hindu kingdom have been found in Rohtas area (**EI**, XXII; p. 222). There is no doubt that during this period the separate existence of Bihar and Tirhut had come to be recognised by the rulers of Delhi and they had begun to feel that Bihar was stepping stone to Lakhnauti. The consistent efforts of the rulers of Delhi consummated in the conquest of Bengal during the time of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, who also destroyed for good the independent kingdom of Tirhut and there begins the history of Muslim rule.

THE TUGHLAQ CONQUEST OF TIRHUT: Harisimhadeva was the last great king of the Karnata dynasty of Mithila. In the absence of the epigraphic and numismatic sources, we have to depend solely on the contemporary literary evidence. He had to bear the brunt of several Muslim onslaughts and it was during his reign that the first recorded Muslim invasion of Tirhut took place. All contemporary literary

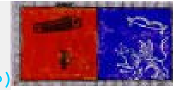


evidences are unanimous on the point that Harisimhadeva was a great king. He ruled over the entire portion of Mithila after having totally subdued his enemies (Chandesvara; **Krtyaratnakara**, Verse 4). Devaditya was his minister of peace and war (Ibid; Verse 7). The best of his ministers, Viresvara, after having stormed the enemy fort, excavated a big tank in Dahivata, a promonent city and constructed a very high palace. He settled the Brahmanas and granted cities like Ramapura to the Srotriyas (Ibid; Verses 9-10). His son Candesvara, a great diplomat and a successful minister, defeated the king of Nepal (Ibid; Verses 13 and 15). The colophon of a **MSS** of the **Vivadaratnakara** informs us that a **Tulapurusa Mahadana** was performed on the Bagmati in Nepal in Saka 1236 (=1314 AD). The colophon of the **Danaratnakara** emphatically asserts that Candesvara rescued the earth, submerged in the flood of the Mlechhas, probably referring thereby to the defeat of some Mohammedan general.

Even after giving due discount to all these hyperbolic statements, one point is quite clear that there had been invasions, Muslim or otherwise, in his reign. Viresvara is said to have stormed the enemy fort. This is supported by various traditions and in one place Harisimhadeva is credited with a victory against the Sultan (**NDC**; p. 66). Dr Chatterji believes that Harisimhadeva recovered his kingdom after the tide was stemmed, since it was after the expulsion of the Muslims or after their voluntary retirement, that **Dhurtasamagama** and **Danaratnakara** were composed (Cf. S K Chatterji and Babua Misra; **Varnanaratnakara**, XVII; also, R Mitra; **Notices**, VI, p. 135). According to Dr Jayaswal, the **Danaratnakara** verse refers to the Bengal Sultan for which credit is given to Ganesvara in his **Sugati-Sopana** (Introductory Verse 4; Cf. **Annals**, XXXV, p. 115-6). Jayaswal's contention cannot be held valid for obvious reason. Bengal Sultan was friendly towards Harisimhadeva as will be evident from Mulla Taquia's statement in the following pages. I do not see any force in Singh's statement that the Surtrana of the Dhurtasamagama was Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (**ST**; p. 67. Similar view has been expressed by Mm Jha in **MTV** (p. 135) who holds that Harisimhadeva was taken to Delhi and released later. There is no doubt that before the recorded Tughlaq invasion, some sort of contest took place between the Karnatas and the Muslim kings, identification of which is not possible in the present state of our knowledge, and that Harisimhadeva was victorious. The question of his being taken to Delhi is not supported by other sources). With Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq we come on a surer footing of sober history. We have different accounts in the various sources about the invasion of Tirhut, in 1324, by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.

In this connection, I shall, first of all, take up an account of the rare Persian MSS, **Basatinul-uns**, now preserved in the British Museum.

(1) Basatinul-uns: Folio 10: After having conquered Lakhnauti, Sonargaon and the suburbs (land and sea), acquired treasury, elephants, horses etc., he (Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq) proceeded towards Tirhut with a view to announcing God's kalma and shariat of the Prophet on this side. The Rai had a very strong fort as well. He was not very powerful but too proud of his might. He was a tyrannical ruler and had revolted and insulted the authority of the previous Sultans (he was not at all submissive and tried in vain till the last to save the independence of Tirhut). When he came to know of the victorious Tughlaq flag, being afraid of this army (then follows the description of Tughlaq's army), the Tirhut king began to tremble. Mahabata's force came so rashly that the Rai had no alternative. His wisdom failed and left his kingdom in a state of hopelessness and did not think it wise to live there.



Folio 11: He managed to escape with the help of a swift horse, left the country and saved himself. He took shelter in a cave or a hill. (The eye-witness account does not mention the arrest of this king and his consequent removal to Delhi). The Tughlaq emperor stayed there in a big town for some days to make necessary arrangements. The fort of the Tirhut king was surrounded on all sides by waters and jungles. The Tughlaq emperor got killed those who had taken shelter there and showed liberality to those who accepted his authority. He handed over the administration of that area to the people of the region and was thus relieved of the anxiety.

Folio 12: After making these arrangements, the emperor returned to Delhi.

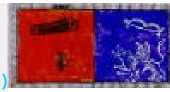
Here we have to remember that the author, then a member of the royal suite had journeyed along with the emperor from Tirhut to Delhi. He refers to the burning heat of the time. He describes most vividly the overwhelming heat, hot wind and hardship that he, with his companions, had suffered. The account of the Basatinul-uns is borne out by Ferishta.

(2) Ferishta (on the authority of the **Futuh-us-Salatin**):

In 1323, complaints reached from Lakhnauti of the oppressions committed by the governors of the province. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq marched in person towards Bengal – Nasiruddin came from Lakhnauti to pay his respects, bringing with him many valuable presents and he was confirmed in his government of Bengal. ....It is related that as the king was passing near the hills of Tirhut, the Raja appeared in arms but was pursued into the woods (Ferishta also does not say about the arrest of this king. He confirms the views of Ahmad Hassan. The flight is unanimously accepted in all accounts with slight variations here and there). Finding that his army could not penetrate them, the king alighted from his horse, called for a hatchet and cut down one of the trees with his own hands. The troops, on seeing, applied themselves to the work with such spirit, that the forest seemed to vanish before them. They arrived at a fort surrounded by seven ditches full of water, and a high wall. The king invested the palace, filled up the ditches and destroyed the walls in three weeks. The Raja and his family were taken, and the great booty obtained, while the government of Tirhut was left in the hands of Ahmad Khan, son of Malik Tabligha after which the king returned towards Delhi.

This statement, with slight variation, is preserved in Biharilal's **Aini-Tirhuta** (AT, p. 13, refers to the arrest of the king; Cf. Briggs, I, p. 46-7; **Annals**, XXXV). According to **Riyaz** (p. 91 fn.), Ghiyasuddin stormed the fort of Tirhut. An account, preserved in the **Bayaz** of the Mulla, is important and deserves consideration.

(3) **The Bayaz of Mulla Taquia**: Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, in 724 AH, after suppressing Bahadur Shah of Bengal, invaded Harisimhapur. Ghiyasuddin undertook an expedition against the king of Mithila because Harasimhadeva had made a common cause with Bahadur Shah of Bengal and had helped him on several occasions. Harisimhadeva was arrested and taken to Delhi and the administration of Tirhut was handed over to Ahmad Khan, son of Malik Tabligha. Tirhut was conquered and the stronghold of the Karnatas was demolished. A mint town named Tughlaqabad or Tughlaqpur was established. Muhammad bin Tughlaq restored the kingdom to Harisimhadeva and appointed Commander-in-Chief. Later on Muhammad Tughlaq was informed of a touchstone in possession of a Maithila minister and wanted to

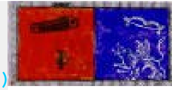


have it (**BMI**, p. 495-96). Since the touchstone could not be procured, he ordered the capture of the Tirhut kingdom and the transportation of the Tirhut king. The king, on hearing this news, fled in 726 AH (=1326 AD).

(4) **Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi** (Barni – ED, III, p. 234): When the Sultan reached Tirhut, the ruler of Lakhnauti, Sultan Nasiruddin came forth with great respect, and without the sword being called into question, all the Rais and the Ranas of the country made their submission.

In all these accounts with the solitary exception of Mulla Taquia, the name of the king is missing. All accounts agree to the storming of the fort of Tirhut and the question of the flight, with slight variations. The king submitted and that is evident from all the sources. As the author of the **Basatinul-uns** was an eye-witness, reliance can be placed on his version which confirms the Mithila tradition that Harisimhadeva fled to Nepal. The Mulla says that both Bahadur Shah and Harisimhadeva were released after the accession of Muhammad Tughlaq. This act of grace on the part of Tughlaq emperor was done on the assurance of Harisimhadeva that he would regularly pay taxes and that assurance brought in its train his appointment as the Commander-in-Chief. Muhammad bin Tughlaq, learning about the touchstone in possession of Viresvara, wanted to have it. The evasion on the part of Viresvara, provoked the Sultan, who ordered Majdulmulk, the mukti of Bihar to put the Raja in permanent imprisonment and confiscate his territories in Tirhut. The Raja got scent and escaped to Nepal in 726 AH. Popular traditions do not avoid mentioning the captivity of the Raja, as Professor Askari thinks (**CS**, p. 12). Jha mentions the arrest of the king and his consequent release and the subordination of Tirhut to the Suba of Bihar (**MTV**, p. 135; **BMI**, p. 459; Bakshi holds that apprehending his discomfiture at the hands of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Harisimhadeva fled to Nepal; Cf. Chanda Jha's edition of **PP**). A fort and a mosque were also constructed there under the imperial orders.

How far the above account of the Mulla is correct, it is very difficult to say. In the absence of any other source, we have to accept it for the time being as a hypothetical proposition. In the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to ascertain whether Harisimhadeva was arrested or not? Candesvara confirms that the earth was flooded with the Mlechhas and he rescued it (**Notices**, VI, 135, No. 2069). Here **Dhurtasamagama** gives a little more information (**NDC**, 66). Here Harisimhadeva is said to have conquered the Surtrana, identified by Chakravarti with Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (**JASB**, 1915; p. 412). This identification does not seem to be probable. The eye-witness account does not mention the arrest of the king and clearly indicates his flight. Did he ignore the event? The answer must be in the negative. The **Dhurtasamagama** account may be construed in the following manner. Ghiyasuddin handed over the administration to those who submitted to his authority, and retired. On his retirement, Harisimhadeva returned to his capital and again asserted his independent authority. To please the master, Jyotirisvara Thakur wrote **Dhurtasamagama** (the comedy of the meeting of the cheats) and this comedy was staged before Harisimhadeva. Here the king has been glorified. Umapati in his **Parijataharananataka** calls Harisimhadeva a powerful king, whose name was terror to the Yavanas (Yavanavanchhedana karala karabalena ....Hindupati Sri Hariharadeven; **JBORS** – III; p. 28). It was about the time of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's invasion that Harisimhadeva fled to Nepal. The date of flight is also known to us from the traditional sources to be 1326 AD (Cf. **Mithilamoda**). The point relating to his arrest needs further investigation (**HCIP** – IV; Chapter on the Mithila. Also, L Petech; '**Medieval History of Nepal**').



In connection with the reign of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, we have to bear in mind that Zia Barani differs from the Batuta on many occasions and hence the difficulty in arriving at any definite truth. All authorities are unanimous on the one central point and that is that the kingdom of Tirhut was destroyed and its capital Simraon was sacked, where Harisimha was ruling (Cf. Allen; **Cambridge Shorter History of India**, p. 118). The last semblance of independent Tirhut kingdom vanished.

MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLAQ: Muhammad bin Tughlaq inherited a large empire and a treasury full of wealth. Darbhanga was the capital of Tirhut under the Tughlaqs. Tirhut came to be known as Tughlaqpur or Tughlaqabad. He erected a big palace there. The vast empire was divided into twenty three provinces. In one of the accounts, the name of Tirhut is missing but that of Bihar is there (**Masalika-ul-Absar**; Tirhut is also missing from Ibn Batuta's list). Barani makes a passing reference to some of the provinces in which Bihar is missing but Tirhut is mentioned (Barani; **Bibliotheca Indica Series**, p. 468; Cf. An article published in the **Vostokovedeniya** – XXII; Moscow, 1957; pp. 115-129). Barani gives a list of the following twelve provinces of the Delhi Empire, viz., Delhi, Telanga, Kampila, Dwarsamudra, Ma'bar, Tirhut, Lakhnauti, Satgaon, Sonargaon, Gujerat, Malwa and Deogir. Muhammad Tughlaq increased it to twenty-three including Bihar. Tirhut was an important part of the empire and a mint town. It was made a separate province under the Tughlaqs.

In his learned treatise, Dr Mahdi Hussain has brought for discussion Tale 4 of Vidyapati's **PP** and has (**HMT**, 97) identified Muhammad, following Grierson certainly, with Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Its historicity, at the very root, is doubtful because Narasimhadeva of the Karnatadynasty cannot be a contemporary of Muhammad Tughlaq, 1325-51 (For details, Cf. **JOT** – I, No. 4; **JASB**, 1915, p. 412; **Annals**, XXXV). The learned Doctor has blindly accepted the argument advanced by Grierson without an eye on historical fact. Even if that point be left out, Muhammad Tughlaq's control over Tirhut is an established fact. It was vigorous and effective. He appointed Qiladar Shah Sufi at Harisimhapur after the flight of the king. He built a mosque and a fort which were destroyed by an earthquake in 1605. The inscription on the mosque is dated 726 AH, the text of which is given below:

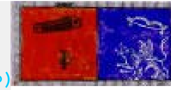
"Qallalah otaala man jaa bill hasnata jalahu ashra amsalah bina Masjid al mujahid fi sabilillah Muhammad bin as Sultan as Sayeed is Shaheed il ghazi ghiyasuddin waddin anarullah burhanahu is soyalat an Tarikhi Dena chi jakul howal masjid alasqa fisanat-i-sitta wa ishreen wasabaa mayaat al hijriya un nabrewah 726". Text of Bedibana Inscription: "tamen shut in walgat-ul-aqtab-ul Akbar Dar Ahad-i-sahanshah-i-adil-shah Muhammad bin Tughlaq lazala mulkohu-wa-daudata hu anaam Bazail izzat daulatwaddin quazi muhar i khas wa Ziknullah Bahar o ain banda Mahmud bin Yusuf Al muluqqub Bistum mah i Rabi ul awwaal sanata saba wa anbeena Mayuta" (747 – 1376 – 7 Cf. MT). The Bedibana Inscription further brings to light the following facts about the Tughlaq rule in Tirhut (**JBRS** – XLI; p. 164 ff): "....a reference is intended to the fort mentioned in the Gazetteer description of the Bedibana village. The structure was made over to Izzuddin for his administration as Quazi, who was a judicial officer, primarily with some ecclesiastical functions." As land revenue was the principal source of revenue, demand of the state varied in different times and places. It was a part of Tughlaq's policy to tax the Hindus in such a way as not to allow them to be blinded by wealth, to become disgruntled and rebellious. These rulers wanted to reduce them to poverty and destitution (**IHQ** – VII, 41; **ED** – III, 230 ff).

The establishment of a mint town at Tughlaqpur is a remarkable point in the history of Tirhut. As an important currency town, Tirhut must have wielded some influence over the economic life of the area. Out of the two copper coins discovered from Tirhut, one is dated 731 AH and they bear the inscription: "province of Tirhut or Tughlaqpur". Of the coins recently discovered at Jayamanglagarh, one coin bears the name of one more mint town, Darul-i-Khilafat. There are two more Tughlaq silver coins in the Jayamanglagarh finds, the reading of which is as follows: (a) Ghazi Ghiyasuddiniya walden Abu Mozzaffar: "Tughlaq Shah Sultan Nasir Amirul Momin; (b) Al Mojahed Fu Sabilil Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah". The Tirhut copper coins of Muhammad Tughlaq read: "He obeys the Sultan – surely he obeys the merciful; struck in the territory of Tughlaqpur alias Tirhut, in the year seven hundred and thirty; 'Reverse' stamped as a tanqqah current in the reign of the slave hopeful of mercy, Muhammad Tughlaq" (C J Brown; '**Coins of India**'). The coins, extant, reflect almost every important change in the emperor's policy and represent different phases. Lanepool holds that Muhammad Tughlaq's forced currency was not intended to defraud. He devoted much attention to his coinage and dealt with it in a scientific way (Lanepool; '**Medieval India**', p. 93 ff). In the words of Thomas, "so indeed did he consider all matters connected with the public currency that one of the earliest acts of his reign was to remodel the coinage, to adjust its division to the altered relative values of the precious metals and to originate new and more exact representation of the subordinate circulation" (**TP**, p. 207, 233). His name shone upon the issues of various mints. His coins are important for the study of the Tughlaq history.

HAJI ILYAS: It was during the rule of the Tughlaqs that Haji Ilyas invaded Tirhut. Haji Ilyas was entrusted with the task of supervision, while Kamesvara Thakur of Oini was charged with the responsibility of collecting taxes. The accession of Haji Ilyas (1342-1357) to the throne of Bengal constitutes a landmark in the history of eastern India.

Taking advantage of the adventurous policy of the Delhi emperor, the rulers of Gorakhpur, Champaran and Tirhut had thrown off the allegiance and had become practically independent. Isami, in his **Futuh-us-Salatin** says that a rebel had proclaimed himself king of Lakhnauti in full enjoyment of the parasol and the throne. He had been supported by the whole of Tirhut and Gauda, the spirit of rebellion having spread everywhere (**PIHC** – XVI; p. 187). The spirit of revolt was visible everywhere within the Tughlaq empire on account of the capricious and whimsical policy of Muhammad Tughlaq (**ED** – III; p. 242-3; **SHB** – II; p. 95 ff). The ruling chiefs of eastern India had begun to raise their heads. Though Haji Ilyas used to send presents to Delhi, every now and then, he became virtually independent (**RAMT** – I; p. 309, 317, 324, 348-9; Cf. **Riyaz**, p. 98-103). The extinction of Delhi's authority and the absence of union among the Hindu Rajas afforded opportunities to Haji Ilyas for ambitious and imperialistic schemes.

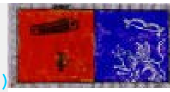
Haji Ilyas invaded Tirhut with success. The subjugation of Tirhut was followed by a very daring incursion into Nepal in 1326 AD, the date of the Bedibana Inscription discovered in the district of Motihari. Professor Askari says, "He (Ilyas) must have followed Bengal route for reaching the hills of Svayambhunatha and sacking the sacred temple of Pasupati, near Khatmandu, as it was much later that he overran Tirhut and advanced via Benares up to Bahraich" (**CS**, p. 13). Jayaswal following the Cambridge History (**CHI** – III; p. 175-263) fixes the date of the invasion of Tirhut at 1352 AD (**JBORS** – XXII; p. 88-90). According to the epigraphic and **Vamsavali** records, the Bengal Sultan marched with a large army and caused heavy damage. The ruling king was Jayarajadeva and the invasion took place in



1346. Accidentally these two dates synchronise with each other and naturally call for an accepted theory (1346 as the date for the invasion of Mithila by Ilyas) to be changed. Sir Jadunath and the writers following him have accepted it without any discussion on the subject (**SHB** – II; p. 103-4; **TM**, p. 467). Nepal had been practically free from the Muslim inroads till 1346 (Cf. D R Regmi; '**Ancient and Medieval Nepal**', p. 153 ff. Except Bendall, Ilyas' attack is omitted by all the chronicles). The route, traversed by Ilyas, to reach the valley of Nepal, is still controversial. The Bedibana Inscription of 1346 is an indication of the fact that the area of Tirhut (especially western part) was under the direct control of the Tughlaqs and it was impossible for Ilyas to follow that route. Regmi believes that Ilyas must have entered through the present district of Purnea and travelling due west must have taken the route of Bagmati (Ibid; the invasion took place in the month of November-December with a huge force). It was only after the conquest that Ilyas probably thought of attacking Tirhut. Perhaps the death of Muhammad Tughlaq emboldened him to take such a daring step of attacking against a neighbouring territory, Tirhut, which had only recently been annexed to the Delhi Sultanate. The invasion of Tirhut must have taken place sometime between 1347 and 1352 AD, because it was in 1352-53 that he had to relinquish his hold on pressure by the Tughlaqs (**CHI** – III; p. 175-263). The latest work on Mithila, **TM**, does not discuss the point at all and unhesitatingly accepts Sir Jadunath's version. It is not true that no authentic date of this invasion can be given, but, then, one thing is sure that it cannot be 1346.

Ilyas's westward campaign was a grand success. He extended his power up to Bahraich in the west. He not only conquered Tirhut but also succeeded in stabilising his conquests by making necessary administrative arrangements there. He divided Tirhut into two parts with Burhi Gandaka as the dividing line. He is credited with having founded the city of Shamsuddinpur (Samastipur) and laid the foundation of Hajipur, which was destined to be the central point in the determination of Muslim policy in north Bihar. According to Al Badaoni, he had built a number of forts which the infidels had destroyed (**RAMT** – I; p. 348-9. The municipal records confirm Mulla Taquia's statement about the foundation of Samastipur by Haji Ilyas). Mulla tells us that Kamesvara of the Oiniwara dynasty objected to the division of Tirhut but to no purpose. Ilyas controlled the area from Nepal Terai to Begusarai. Ferishta confirms the fact that he was the founder of Hajipur. The Mulla further says that his power extended from Darbhanga to the mouth of Kosi. The wishes of the people were not taken into consideration and the opposition was terrorised into silence. Kamesvara's loyalty to Delhi was a known fact, because his kingdom was a gift from Delhi. Hence Ilyas's policy of repression and division of Tirhut should not be taken as something extraordinary. He realised the strategic importance of Hajipur. A grip over the territory was maintained through the two newly founded cities. It is apparent that the whole of Tirhut, for the time being, was groaning under the deadweight of Ilyas's arm. It appears that his Tirhut career was meteoric in character. The Rajas of Champaran and Gorakhpur transferred their allegiance to him.

FIRUZ TUGHLAQ: The starting victory of Haji Ilyas and his dream of imperial suzerainty opened the eyes of Firuz Tughlaq. Firuz had only settled down his affairs in Delhi, when he heard of the rapacious activities of Ilyas. We have seen that Muhammad Tughlaq had appointed him to supervise the territory of Tirhut, which by now, he had conquered. Delhi considered it as an act of betrayal and an open defiance of the imperial authority. Firuz could not tolerate the defiance of imperial authority and as such proceeded to measure swords with the Bengal Sultan.



Afif gives the following account of the march of Firuz Tughlaq (**ED** – III; p. 293-4): "Firuz marched triumphantly in great strength .... when he arrived on the banks of Kosi ....he found the army of Shamsuddin posted in force on the other side, near its junction with the Ganges. The passage appeared difficult, so the Sultan marched hundred kosa up to Kosi, and crossed it below Champaran (?) at the place where the river issues from the mountain but the waters ran with such force that the stones of five hundred maunds weight were borne along with the shawls. The Sultan ordered a line of elephants to be drawn across the river, both above and below the fort, to facilitate the passage. The upper line was to break the force of the current, the lower line was furnished with ropes, to which men, carried away by the stream, might cling. ....The Sultan succeeded in crossing the river and followed Shamsuddin by way of Champaran and Recap (?)." Then follow details of the battle (**ED** – III; p. 294-5).

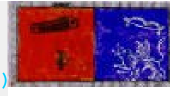
The above description deserves notice in view of the fact that it gives certain indications: a) The king went straight to the bank of the Kosi; b) Ilyas's force was on the other side, near its junction with the Ganges. It appears that the two armies were face to face on either side of the junction, i.e., somewhere near or opposite Rajmahal; c) The Sultan marched hundred kosa up the Kosi and crossed it below Champaran (?), where the river issues from the mountain. Be it noted here that Kosi issues from the Himalayas near Barahaksetra and not near Champaran. The possibility is that Firuz moved back and followed the terai route to Bengal. For to the north near the present borders of Nepal, there is a place called Jiaran, where the Kosi narrows down to a rushing mountain torrent, being easily fordable (**SHB** – II; p. 106). Perhaps Afif confused Jiaran with Champaran. Recap may be identified with Rajwara or Rajabiraja in the Nepal territory and on way to the east near Kosi. It is a simple conjecture. Firuz brought his troops to this point and safely got them across the river with the help of the local Rajas. Ilyas retreated down the Ganges.

Barani does not mention these places but simply states that the imperial march was through Gorakhpur, Kharosa and Tirhut. Chakravarti believes that Barani's Kharosa, between Gorakhpur and Tirhut, is probably to be identified with Champaran (**JASB**, 1913; p. 413). Out of these two accounts, one point is clear that his route lay across the Ganges to the Kosi river. Ferishta says that on his arrival in the neighbourhood of Gorakhpur, the Zemindaras of that place made usual presents to him and they were admitted to pay their respects. Udi Simha, Muqaddam of that place, came to pay his respacts and presented him suitable offerings in money. The Raja of Gorakhpur also paid up the arrears (**SIH**, S, p. 67; Dow's translation, Ibid, fn 31. "Ilyas was the master of all Bengal and Bihar up to Benaras." There is no mention of Kosi here). In his campaign against Ilyas, Firuz was helped by the local Rajas (Cf. K K Basu, '**The House of the Tughlaqs**' in **JASB** – XXVI; 253-NS). Mulla Taquia affirms that Kamesvara presented himself before Firuz with suitable offerings and promised to continue as a tributary. The aim of Firuz's conquest was to re-annex the territory from the Kosi to Oudh. After subjugating the chiefs of Gorakhpur, Kharosa and Tirhut, he made necessary administrative arrangements for the territory from Sarayu to Kosi. Then he carried on his operations against the fort of Ekadala, where Ilyas had entrenched his position very strongly. Afif's account says that he did not annex Bengal (**ED** – III; p. 294-5; **JASB**, 1915, p. 413). The peace was concluded and the king returned to Delhi without realising his object. Later on presents were sent to Firuz Shah (**SIH**, S, p. 67-69).

When the Sultan on his return journey arrived at the bank of river Kosi, he found that rains had set in. He ordered the troops to embark in boats. The whole army thus crossed (**ED** – III; p. 298). The account throws some light on the flood of the Kosi. Kosi, when in spate, is dangerous. Perhaps this was the impelling force behind Firuz's aim to appoint officers to examine the banks of all water-courses, and report how the inundations extended. If any village went to ruin, he dismissed the officers in disgrace (Ibid, p. 302). After his return he consolidated his position in the Doab. Firuz's authority in Bihar is proved by a Jain stone inscription which refers to Malik Vayu as the Mandalika (or Muqti or Governor) and Nasiruddin as **Shahna** or the Kotwala (**JBORS** – V; Cf. My '**Select Inscriptions of Bihar**').

Firuz had to march this side for the second time in 759 AH to suppress the son and successor of Haji Ilyas, Sikandar Shah (his coins have been found in different parts of Tirhut). Sikandar Shah aspired to revive the pristine glory of his paternal kingdom and as such began to show signs of his rebellious activities. Firuz marched via Gorakhpur, Chakait and Tirhut and on his return to Jaunpur in 761 AH, he marched from there towards Jajnagar by way of Bihar, where, according to **Sirat-i-Firuzshahi**, he reached in the spring of 762 AH. As regards north Bihar, Barani refers to his frequent visit to Tirhut, which was brought into subjection and made loyal tributary as in the past. We know that during his expedition against Sindh, Khan-i-Jehan demanded the despatch for men to all the various dependencies of the state, viz., Badaun, Kannauj, Sandil Oudh, Jaunpur, Bihar, Tirhut, Chanderi, Dhar and other states (**ED** – III; p. 333).

Mulla Taquia tells us that in 1353, when Firuz came to Tirhut, Kamesvara and other Zemindaras submitted and promised help against Ilyas. It was through the help of the people of Tirhut that Firuz could get across the river Kosi. Firuz destroyed the division of Tirhut, created by Ilyas and re-united the two parts under his own hegemony. For the administrative purpose he appointed a quazi and other officials. These officers were to look to the maintenance of the imperial authority in Tirhut. It was nothing more than a re-assertion of the Tughlaq authority in Tirhut. On many issues of Tirhut history, where Barani is silent, Mulla Taquia is not explicit. There is no reference in Barani to show that there was a meeting between Kamesvara and Firuz. Since there is no question of meeting in Barani's account, it is futile to hope for a reference about his dethronement as Thakur thinks (**TM**, p. 408). The Mulla hints at a point which seems to be reasonable. Firuz had some doubt about the loyalty of Kamesvara and hence he appointed Bhogisvara as a king of Tirhut. The fact is borne out by Vidyapati (Cf. H P Shastri; '**Kirtilata**', p. 4: '**Piyasakha bhani Piyarojasah surtana samanala**'). In the present state of our knowledge, we have to depend on this solitary piece of evidence so far Mithila's relation with Firuz Tughlaq is concerned.

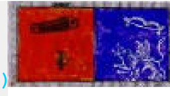


CHAPTER X

THE LATER KARNATAS OF MITHILA AND NEPAL

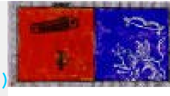
From a colophon of a Tibetan **MSS**, it appears that on November 18, 1260 AD, a king named Virasimhadeva was ruling in Tirbhukti.[1] There is no mention of any such ruler either in Mithila tradition or in Nepalese inscriptions or **Vamsavalis**. Since Virasimha is not lineally descended, in direct succession, from Nanyadeva, it may be presumed that he was ruling in the eastern part of Mithila of which Malladeva was the founder. He might have been a descendant of Malladeva, whose line is not recorded in any official genealogy of the Karnatas of Mithila. My point of view gets further confirmation if we look at the writings of Sriballabha. Sriballabhacharya refers to a Karnata king of the 12th century AD. He refers to a reigning monarch in an elegant passage (p. 290)[2] and it was repeated by Vardhamana in his Commentary on the same passage (p. 291). D C Bhattacharya has suggested that 'if the **Purusapariksa** of Vidyapati is to be believed, this monarch of the Karnata dynasty was living still ....Sriballabha was referring to this monarch of Mithila in the above passage. ....The reference is to a Karnata family.'[3] If this be accepted, there would be no hesitation in stating that the author, here, refers to Malladeva. Sriballabha again refers to Nrpati and that the reference is to a living monarch is proved by author's own assertion.[4]

Here it is to be borne in mind that Karnata-Chakravarti is distinguished from a local Nrpati, who must have been a feudatory of the Karnatas. Since there is no name of a king and the epithet Karnata-chakravarti is further qualified by the word '**Lalana**', a term usually applied to youth, in general, on all auspicious occasions in songs, prevalent even today in Mithila, we may assume that it refers to Malladeva. Vardhamana is said to have been his dependent and an inscription is attributed to him.[5] Nrpati, whose name is also not mentioned, was a feudatory of Malladeva. We, further, get a reference to the Karnatas in the writings of a great scholar, Divakaropadhyaya, better known as Udyotakara in Mithila. In one of the **MSS** of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (No. 4770) of the Government collection, there is a reference to '**Mithilesvarena**' .... '**Devarajye**' ....in LS 164 (=1283 AD).[6] We can easily connect this king with the one, referred to above and mentioned in the colophon. D C Bhattacharya believes that the transcript was made when a certain king was reigning in Mithila. In 1283, the Karnatas were in the enjoyment of full parasol of sovereignty and so there is no room for any doubt about it. Another **MS** of the Asiatic Society of LS 159 refers to Harisimhadeva. Either the monarch referred to by Divakara, should be identified with Harisimhadeva or a descendant of Virasimhadeva of the colophon of the Tibetan **MS**. No other dynasty is known to have been ruling in Mithila in 1283 AD except the Karnatas, whose two branches had two distinct headquarters.



There are Karnata kings whose names are generally not found in the so-called official genealogy. That is the case with Saktisimha. He does not come directly as a lineal descendant of Ramasimha in the **Vamsavali**. If Virasimha be accepted as a descendant of Malladeva, Saktisimha (or Sakrasimha) should be taken as his descendant ruling in eastern Mithila. The Sanskrit texts and the contemporary **MSS** hardly refer to any eastern region and even as late as the 13th-14th centuries, we have frequent references to Simraon which is only natural because of its imperial glory and halo. The **Vamsavalis** come in conflict with the material supplied by Pratapamalla's inscriptions. After Ramasimha, Harisimha was possibly ruling in the north-western region, with headquarter at Simraon, while Sakrasimha was ruling in the eastern region. Ramasimha's son, Bhavasimha, seems to have pre-deceased his father because we do not find any mention of that prince in the local tradition. There seems to have ensued a struggle for succession and Sakra or Saktisimha put forward his claim for the throne and ultimately succeeded for the time being. The fact that he adopted an autocratic attitude, which offended his nobles, is indicative of an extraordinary event. The confusion, thus created, seems to have been got mixed up with the tradition which has been so faithfully maintained. Harisimha's attempt to join the two houses, met with little or no success. The problem would remain a mystery until the names of the descendants of Malladeva are brought to light. The uncertainty about the dates and events in various traditions and oscillation of names even in the traditional genealogy has enabled writers like Petech to hazard conjecture regarding the possibility of a civil war after Ramasimhadeva. Though there is a substantial agreement amongst all sources about the names prior to Harisimha, two names of the **Vamsavalis** do not find favour with the Mithila tradition. Some important variations in the different sources are the omission of Saktisimha and the addition of Karmasimha in the prologue of the drama **Muditakuvalayasva** and the addition of Harideva by D W Wright and Bhagwanlal. Ray identified Bhavasimha of the drama with Bhupalasimha.[7] Harideva is to be identified with his namesake in the drama **Parijataharana** by Umapati.[8]

The Nepalese Vamsavalis (**VK**, **VT**, **VW**, **VB** and **VR**) do not enable us to arrive at any considered opinion about the entry of Harisimha into Nepal. The dates, sometimes, do not exactly correspond to the events mentioned therein. From an introduction to the **Krtyachintamani** it appears that Harisimha was dead as there is no mention of any living king.[9] Harisimha is respected in Nepal for the introduction of mythical Taleju and his entry into Nepal is mentioned in the **VK**, **VT** and **VW**. Petech has suggested that after his entry into Nepal, Harisimha disappears from history and his end is unknown. We learn from the **VR** (Vamsavali in possession of Mr Regmi) that 'on 446 Magha Sukla 3, Tirhuti Raja Harisimha being attacked by the Turks from Delhi was compelled to flee abandoning Simraongarh which was destroyed. With all his family and ministers, the Raja entered the hilly country and was in distress. He was on the way to Rajagrama within Dolkha, and died in Tinpata. Thereafter his minister and son and all others were arrested and thrown into prison by one Maghiram Bharo (a nobleman) who also took all their wealth.'[10] According to this evidence, Harisimha entered Nepal in 1326 AD and Simraongarh was destroyed. Harisimha's end, according to the **VR**, is 'not unknown' as Petech thinks.[11] According to a local tradition, Harisimha entered Nepal in 1325-6. While on his way to Nepal, he took rest for a while in a village named Umagrama (Pargana Bhala, P S Harilakhi, Distt Darbhanga). It is believed that he died here. Harisimha is still worshipped there as a **Gramadevata**.[12] While these conflicting evidences are there which cannot be rejected outright, Petech suggests that Jagatasimha, a son of Harisimha, took his



place amongst the highest nobility of Nepal and 'the link between the later Mallas and Harisimha can be sought only here and nowhere else.'[13] Jagatasimha's marriage with Nayakadevi and the consequent connection of the Mallas with the family of Harisimha is reminiscent of some real authority wielded by the successors of the Karnatas. The chiefs of Nepal ruled as vassals of the Karnatas, otherwise there was no necessity of mentioning them in the **Vamsavalis**.[14] The Mallas and the Karnatas were ultimately united into one and ruled Nepal for a considerably longer period.[15]

Did the Karnatas, after this episode, disappear from the history of Mithila? Though the question is very pertinent, its answer, in the present state of our knowledge, must be in the negative. It is true that for the time being there was chaos in Mithila, though the Oinvaras had succeeded the Karnatas. For some time they were struggling for power. The Karnatas seem to have ruled in the extreme north bordering on the Terai area. After the retirement of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, the descendants of Harisimha seem to have returned to Simaraon and ruled there and according to Levi, the dynasty ruled in Tirhut for a long time.[16]From the Chinese sources, this fact stands confirmed and the Chinese rulers accepted the Simaraon dynasty as the ruling dynasty of Nepal.[17] Harisimha's successors seem to have extended influence up to Bhatagaon. The Karnata supremacy, though lost in Mithila, was established in Nepal. Dharmasena, a descendant of Mukundasena, is said to have befriended Harisimha. The Bediban inscription[18] is an indirect proof of the fact that the Tughlaq rulers set up an administrative headquarter near Simaraongarh to guard their frontier against the onslaughts of the Karnatas.

Harisimha was followed by Matisimha (15 years); he by Saktisimha (sic) to be succeeded by Syamasimha. Simaraon is said to have been destroyed by Haji Ilyas in course of his campaign against Nepal. After Syamasimha, the Mallas again came into power and this dynasty in Nepal has, sometimes, been described as the Karnata-Malla. Jagatasimha's connection with the Mallas is known to us from the **Vamsavalis**. Yaksamalla is said to have extended his authority in Tirhut. The matrimonial alliance between the Karnatas and the Mallas in Nepal united the different warring houses. The Patan inscription of 1413 AD informs us that the sons of Jayasthitimalla were partners with the Karnatas at Bhatgaon. Jayasthiti evidently based his claim to the throne upon the Karnata origin of his wife's father, Jagatasimha, but to increase his glory still further, Jayasthitimalla and his descendants traced their descent through the male line direct from Harisimha and the whole genealogy was transformed to substantiate this claim.[19] It is evident that the Karnatas, though displaced from their patrimony, fared well in Nepal for a considerably longer period.

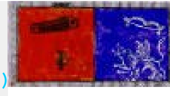
In Mithila, one Nrsimha is mentioned in the **MSS** of **Danapaddhati** by Ramdatta.[20] Ramdatta was the minister of his Nrpati. He has been described as the crest-jewel of the Karnatas and the unquestioned sovereign of Mithila. Ramdatta was a cousin of Candesvara and he flourished in the first half of the 14th century. This Nrsimha, to my mind, seems to have belonged to the branch of Malladeva and was possibly ruling in 212 LS (=1331 AD) somewhere near Havipattana, as is evident from his queen's inscription, in north-eastern Mithila. The main branch of the Karnatas was now limited to Simaraon and the surrounding Nepalese areas. It is not possible for Karmaditya of the Havidih inscription[21] to be a minister of Narasimhadeva, third in descent from Nanyadeva, in 1331 AD and it is, therefore, natural to infer that this inscription should be assigned to Nrsimha II of the Danapaddhati and we can, with some amount of certainty, suggest that this Nrsimha was a later Karnata ruler possibly descending from the

line of Malladeva.[22] Jayaswal seems to be correct in differing from M M Chakravarti that this king should be taken as Nrsimha II and should be regarded as 'descendant and local successor of Harisimha.' There is nothing to disbelieve the fact that the successors of the Karnatas ruled over the low-lying plains and Terai area of Tirhut spreading from the borders of Champaran right up to Purnea and they continued struggling for power at least up to 1390 AD, if not more. The possibility of the successors of either Harisimha or the line of Malladeva gets further confirmation from the fact that they were recognised by the Tughlaqs. R C Mazumdar has suggested, "Muhammad bin Tughlaq appointed a scion ....of the ruling family to which Harisimha belonged, the ruler of Tirhut under the suzerainty of Delhi. ....Nrsimhadeva or his successor took advantage of the disorder in the empire to throw off the yoke of the Sultanate, and hence Firuz Tughlaq selected a Hindu ruler of Tirhut from a different family."[23] Mazumdar's suggestion regarding the contemporaneity of the Karnata Narsimha with Muhammad Tughlaq, following Grierson and others, is however untenable.[24] Levi suggests that the rulers of Champaran were descended from Harisimha[25]. Nrsimha II possibly represented a separate line in Mithila.

Since the days of Gangadeva, a different line of the Karnatas was there under the leadership of Malladeva with headquarters at Bheet Bhagwanpur. Malladeva's line did not get any preference as long as the main line of Gangadeva's successor continued to rule at Simaraon. Malladeva, the heir-apparent, did not get any preponderance at the court and how and why he becomes unknown in the history of Mithila is yet a mystery. Even the Panji records do not help us in constructing the Karnata chronology and my friend, the late Professor Ramanatha Jha of C M College, Darbhanga, writes to say that the Panji records of the Karnatas are not available. In Mithila, the descendants of Harisimha are known to have ruled for a considerable period. Since Nanya's descendants were ruling in the vicinity of Simaraon and Nepal, it is natural to expect that on the eastern fringe the successors of Malladeva were ruling. From Simaraon, the descendants of Harisimha could not expect to rule over a bigger area, specially at a time when a major portion of Tirhut was under the Oinvaras. The area of north Bihar, now called Tirhut, extended up to Gorakhpur and there were various minor dynasties ruling here and there. On the evidence of the Bedibana inscription, it can be surmised that the main branch of the Karnatas were forced to be within the vicinity of Simaraon, while in other parts of Mithila, the descendants of Malladeva continued to rule in a very limited area. The following kings may be tentatively assigned to the line of Malladeva in eastern Mithila.

MAIN LINE OF NANYADEVA:

1. Nanyadeva (1097-1147).
2. Gangadeva (1147-1188).
3. Narasimhadeva (1188-1227).
4. Ramasimhadeva (1227-1279).
5. Bhavasimha + Karmasimha of the **Vamsavali**. Period of confusion. Simha Bhupala, a contemporary of Prataparudra of the 14th century AD, is the author of **Rasarnava-sudhakara**, a short treatise on poetics, and **Sangitaratnakaravyakhya**. He is identified with a ruler of Mithila of the 14th century.[26]
6. Harisimhadeva (1279-1325/26).



Jagatasimha is not mentioned in the Mithila tradition. The introduction of the **Muditakuvalayasva** mentions Vallarasimha as the successor of Harisimha.[27]
Matisimha – Saktisimha – Syamasimha.

The Chinese knew of no other king except the successors of Harisimha between 1387 and 1418. The Chinese evidence leads us to believe that the Karnatas exercised an effective power. (Levi, II. P. 230 ff.)

Syamasimha's daughter was married to Jayabhadramalla who ascended the throne after his father-in-law.

Tirhutia Jagatasimha is said to have enjoyed special sovereignty for a few days (Cf. Bendall; **History of Nepal**, p.10).

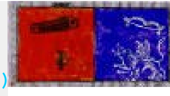
Mm Mukunda Jha Bakshi has pointed out that Harisimha had a son named Bhairavasimha who did not occupy the throne. Later on, his descendants became founders of the Shakarpura Estate in the district of Begusarai.

LINE OF MALLADEVA:

1. Malladeva – possibly Karnata-Chakravarti-Lalana of Sriballabha.
2. Virasimhadeva.
3. Sakra or Saktisimhadeva – possibly overpowered by Harisimha in connection with the establishment of Harisimhapur. Mithilesvarena of Divakaropadhyaya of LS 164.
4. Nrsimha II.
5. Ramasimha II (Mahanrpati).
6. Gadadharasimha in whose reign the **MS** OF **Krtyakalpataru** was written in LS 374 AD.[28]
7. Rajaraja – ruling in the 16th century in the north-eastern corner of Mithila and Bhaura. His inscription has been noticed.
8. Sarvasimhadeva whose inscription is there at Barantpur in the district of Saharsa.

Some Rajputs trace their descent from Malladeva and his successors.

In so far as the line of Nanyadeva is concerned, the materials collected by Petech are valuable. The Malla rulers from Anantamalla to Jayarjunadeva are ignored by the later **Vamsavalis**, though numerous colophons and inscriptions mention them.[29] Saktisimha's connection with China is admitted by Petech.[30] Petech further observes, "The purpose of the later chronicles in piecing together this Simha dynasty with the one from the Karnata dynasty of Tirhut, two (?) from the Ramas of Banepa and one uncertain, and in substituting it for the legitimate Malla rulers, seems to have been to create a continuity between Harisimha and Jayasthitimalla."[31] While not disagreeing totally with Petech for the present, it may be suggested that the main branch of the Karnata line, of which Harisimha was the last great ruler,

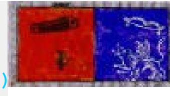


somehow or other managed to get a foothold in Nepal and ultimately merged with the Mallas who called themselves Karnata-Mallas. In spite of all evidence adduced by Petech, the mysterious connection of the Karnatas and the Mallas remains to be explored further till we get some definite evidence to reject the Karnata authority in Nepal altogether.

In a four-act **Ramayana**[32] by Dharmagupta, a poet-laureate, we get some description about a king named Yuthasimhadeva. Dharmagupta was commanded by him. Yuthasimha does not seem to be a king of Nepal though his dominion included a part of Nepal. From his title, he seems to have belonged to the race of Harisimha and from his worshipping of Sikharanagram, he seems to have dominions in Nepal. What stamps him as the king of Simaraon is the epithet that he helped in the establishment of Surki dynasty. He appears to be one of those Hindu Rajas who helped Malik-Sarwar, a Khwaja, to establish himself as Malik-us-sharq. Yuthasimha seems to have been a contemporary and a relative of Jayasthiti, who, by marrying Rajjalladevi, had made himself the master of Nepal. The establishment of Sharqi rule coincides with the end of the reign of Firuz and Yuthasimha's help in the matter seems to have been a natural corollary to Firuz's policy of replanting the Oinvaras by putting down the Karnatas in Mithila.

In the 15th century, Mithila was ruled by four dynasties –(i.)Champaran was ruled by Raja Prthvisimhadeva and his successors. Prthvisimha was ruling in Samvat 1492 (=1434-35 AD). He was succeeded by Saktisimha and latter by Madanasimhadeva who extended his rule up to Gorakhpur and who was the author of **Madanaratnapradipa**.[33] Levi considers them to be descendants of Harisimha.(ii.) Central Mithila was was under the hegemony of the Oinvaras, whose rule extended, at least, from village Oini in the district of Muzaffarpur to Kandaha in the district of Saharsa. They were ruling on the north Gandaka.[34] (iii.) The area, on the south of the Gandaka, was subject to the Sultan of Bengal with headquarters at Hajipur, founded by Haji Ilyas. This particular area was occasionally ravaged by the Muslim rulers of the west. The Oinvaras, in spite of their shaky existence, succeeded in maintaining their independence. (iv.) The remains of the Karnatas ruling on the north-eastern fringe of Mithila extending from the vicinity of Bhaura, Bahera to the confines of Barantpur in the Saharsa district and the Moranga region of the district of Purnea. The political situation of Mithila was fast fluctuating. Ruknuddin Barbak Shah of Bengal had conquered Tirhut, though that was impermanent. His representative Kedar Rai was overpowered by Bhairavasimha of the Oinvara dynasty.

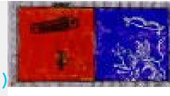
If Karmasimha of the Muditakuvalayasva be taken as one of the rulers of the Karnata dynasty, there are reasons to believe that his soldiers acquired authority in the vicinity of Tirhut, and Ajit Rai of the Sisodiya tribe with seven hundred soldiers entered into the services of Karmasimha. Karmasimha had two brothers[35] – Nandakumara, Raja of Nandapur near Bhawara in Tirhut, and Saranadeo, Raja of Belka on the Kosi. Taking advantage of the situation, Ajita Sena assumed the government. He was succeeded by Tulasena, who built on the hills the fortress of Makwanpur extending from Gandaki to the Adhwara river. Then followed Dambhal, Gajapati, Chandra, Rudra and Mukundasena. Mukundasena possessed extensive territory and he divided his estates among his four sons, of which Makwanpur fell to the lot of Lohagga. Lohagga, on crossing the Adhwara river, took possession of a small territory on the plain belonging to Mohan Thakur of the Oinvara dynasty and seized his territory. He also seized Korani, near Bhawarah, Khesraha, Rampur, Pokhari, Jhamuna, Jogoda, Dhapar, Kalisha, Belka, Koth belonging to Raja Karandeo, Samada belonging to Raja Ballabhadeo, Karjain belonging to Raja Durlabhadeo, who were



descended from Sarandeo, brother of Karmasimha and Nandakumara. Lohagga, then, descended to Megharai on the Kosi. Lohagga had two sons – Raghava and Bhagwanta. Raghava's son, Harihara, extended his authority up to Gondwara and took the title of Hindupati.[36]

The **MS** of **Kantakoddhara** by Madhusudana Thakur (Folio No. 120a of the Asiatic Society **MSS** No. G – 1439 dated LS 491 copied at Vikramapura in Mithila) and the two fragments thereof at Tanjore[37] (Folio – 27 and 131) supply us with an important information regarding the existence of Karnata rule in Mithila in the 16th century AD. Madhusudana Thakur wrote his commentary under the patronage of Maharajadhiraja of Ramaraja, described as Karnata-Chakravarti (also in the Tanjore **MSS** copy) and Bhujabalabhima[38]. This statement is supported by an unpublished inscription of Ramaraja, which was brought to my notice by Dr B K Varma of Bahera. It was discovered in 1954 and I saw it in January 1955 but the stone bearing the inscription has since been misplaced. It contained two lines mentioning the name of Ramaraja. There is another inscription of Ramanatharaja, the text of which is available.[39] whatever might have been the authority of Ramaraja, the fact remains that the Karnatas were ruling in a part of Mithila in the 16th century. I believe that this Ramaraja was a later Karnata ruler belonging to the line of Malladeva. The scribe of the colophon, referred to, was the grandson of Bhagirath Thakur, elder brother of Mahesh Thakur. It is reasonable to conjecture that after the fall of the Oinvaras and before the rise of the Khandavalas, there was confusion in Mithila and the Karnatas, who were reduced to a negligible position, seized the opportunity. The period, under review, saw the rise of the Bhars, Rajputas, Majlisha Khan and Keshava Kayastha. They might have combined to make a fresh bid for power in this region. Rajaraja Karnata might have availed himself of the opportunity and placed himself over the head of such a coalition, which ruled over Mithila till the rise of Mahesa Thakur. The situation was such as to enable a capable man to fish in the troubled waters of Mithila.

Even after the establishment of the Khandavala dynasty, the Karnatas seem to have been reduced to the status of petty zemindars. There is yet another theory that the ancestors of the Bettiah Raj replaced the Karnatas of Simaraon. Till the time of Mahinatha Thakur, the rulers of Bettiah were also known as the rulers of Simaraon. Some of the later Karnatas were mixed up with the Rajputas. We learn from the Mithila tradition that Kesri Simha Chouhan and Samgramasimha were in the service of Bhairavasimha of the Oinvara dynasty and they received jagirs in recognition of their services.[40] There is an inscription, in Maithili character of the 16th century, at Barantpur in the district of Saharsa[41] bearing the name of Sarvasimhadeva. The king was possibly a Karnata ruler of some importance. After the establishment of the Khandavala dynasty, the Karnatas seem to have moved further east and established themselves in the vicinity of the district of Saharsa. The extant of the later Karnata art are to be found in Mathnigopala pargana, Baruari, Balha, Basbitti, Srinagar, and in other parts of the district of Saharsa. Maithila writers refer to the fact that the Rajputs of Mithila were connected with the Karnatas.[42] The family records of the Rajput families of Panchgachia and Baruari go to show that Harisimhadeva had a son, named Patirajasimha, who had established himself at Gandhavairi, after whom they came to be known as Gandhavariyas. They trace their descent from Harisimha, while some of them regard themselves as descendants of Malladeva. We get the following names from the different sources as successors of Harisimha – Jagatasimha in Nepal (Petech), Matisimha and his successors in Simaraon and Nepal (**MTV**, **Levi** and others), Bhairavadatta (**BMI**) and Patirajasimha in the Gandhavariya tradition. These are not



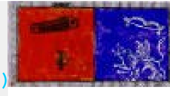
authentic names but we have to accept until further evidence is forthcoming. After the end of the reign of Ramasimha II in 1390 AD, the two warring houses of the Karnatas seem to have combined to eke out their separate existence in the neighbourhood of Bhaur, where we find Rajaraja ruling in the 16^{th}-17^{th} century AD. If the doubtful Rajput tradition is to be relied upon (as the history of the Gandhavariya Rajput is yet to be written), the descendants of the Karnatas ruled Mithila for a longer period even after the fall of the Oinvaras. Later on they became the Rajput zamindars of north Bihar. Many important documents are in the possession of the Rajput families and their publication would throw a welcome light on the subject.

List of inscriptions of Mithila (relating to the Karnatas and Oinvaras):

i. Simaraon Inscription;
ii. Andhratharhi Inscription;
iii. Srinagar Inscription;
iv. Asi-Matiahi Inscription;
v. Khajouli Inscription;
vi. Begusarai Plaque Inscription;
vii. Bheet Bhagwanpur Inscription;
viii. Bahera Inscription of Ramaraja (since lost);
ix. Ladaho Inscription of Ramnatha Raja (Do);
x. Havidih Inscription;
xi. Kandaha Inscription;
xii. Bhagirathpur Inscription; and
xiii. Barantpur Inscription.

The coin legends on the gold coin of Sivasimha, and silver coins of Bhairavasimha and a large number of muslim coins discovered from the region.

There are many inscriptions still unnoticed.

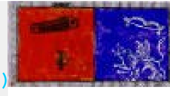


CHAPTER XI

THE OINVARAS OF MITHILA[1]

BASED MAINLY ON VIDYAPATI

Kirtilata is an important work of Vidyapati which gives us a detailed chronological history of Mithila under the Oinvaras. The last semblance of the independent Hindu kingdom of Mithila was destroyed in 1324-25 AD by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. He placed Kameshwara on the throne of Mithila.[2] Kameshwara was a Rajpandita.[3] Though the Karnatas were defeated, some local chieftains were ruling in Mithila side by side with the Oinvara dynasty, whose capital was at Sugauna in Madhubani district. Muhammad Tughlaq also held sway over Mithila and he established a mint here at Tughlaqpur urf Tirhut. Two of his coins still exist and they belong to the forced currency system. One is dated C. 731 AH (=1330-31). Under the circumstances, it is reasonable to believe that the political status of Kameshwara dynasty was no better than that of a dependent kingdom. Internally he might have enjoyed autonomous status, but externally he was under the control of Delhi. In the later years of Muhammad Tughlaq, the forces of disintegration had a free play and provincial chiefs and semi-independent kingdoms raised their heads. On the authority of **Futooh-us-Salatin** it has been said that Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq left the Government of Tirhut in the hands of Ahmad Khan, son of Malik Tabliga.[4] This must have been done with a view to supervise his Tirhut kingdom and it can be concluded with some amount of certainty that Kameshwara was not an independent king. The unstable political condition in north India encouraged Shamsuddin Ilyas to make daring raid into the kingdom of Tirhut in 1345-46. He founded the city of Hajipur.[5] He subjugated Tirhut without any difficulty and from there he led an expedition to Nepal.[6] He divided his Tirhut kingdom into two parts and, having fixed Burhi-Gandaka as his boundary line, forced Kameshwara to shift. He controlled from Nepal terai to Begusarai and when Kameshwara objected to this division, he quelled him. Even the kings of Champaran and Gorakhpur transferred their allegiance to him. Ilyas stopped all payments to Delhi after the death of Muhammad Tughlaq. Kameshwara’s power was curbed and he was forced to transfer his allegiance to the Bengal Sultan.[7] Ilyas had rashly invaded Tirhut with the sole object of annexing eastern districts of the kingdom of Delhi. Firuz Tughlaq started a campaign against Haji Ilyas. He aimed at a reconquest of territory from Oudh to Kosi. His route lay across the Ganges to the Kosi river. Inhis campaign against Haji Ilyas, he was assisted by local Rajas. Udaya Singh[8], king of Gorakhpur, presented him a lac of Tankas and two elephants and got imperial favour. According to Barni, he marched to Gorakhpur, Kharosa and Tirhut.[9] These chiefs were subjugated and arrangements were made for the administration of the territory between Sarju and Kosi. Firuz reunited Tirhut and placed it in the hands of Bhogishwara, son of Kameshwara.[10] For administrative purpose, he appointed Quazi in Tirhut. Vidyapati speaks highly of this dynasty.



It is really a very hazardous task to ascertain truth out of confusing and conflicting heaps of materials. Mithila tradition asserts that Firuz had handed over the kingdom to Kameshwara but he did not like to shoulder the administrative responsibility and requested Firuz to nominate Bhogishwara, who was his friend.[11] This particular point is not even supported by another local tradition which asserts that Muhammad Tughlaq handed over the kingdom to Kameshwara in 1340 AD (Hijri 741) and directed Shamsuddin Ilyas of Bengal to realise the tribute and supervise the kingdom.[12] It approaches truth better than the first source. Bhogishwara was made the king of Mithila by Firuz Tughlaq. **Mithila Darpan**[13] gives us a different picture altogether and does not accept Kameshwara as the first king of the dynasty. Nor does it refer to any Muslim invasion except one in the reign of Sivasingh. Bihari Lal's **Ain-i-Tirhut** is similarly confusing and conflicting.[14] All these above accounts are based more or less on hearsay and traditions, but for the construction of the history of Mithila, they are important. These sources, unless supplemented by more reliable evidence, should be tapped more cautiously. For a scientific history of the Oinvara dynasty, Vidyapati is the most important source and we have to depend upon him for reliable information. He served under a large number of kings and queens of this dynasty and as such his knowledge of the ups and downs in this family must have been first hand. Of all these conflicting evidences, I accept Vidyapati's version. Kameshwara was succeeded by Bhogishwara (Bhogis Rai), who was a friend and contemporary of Firuz Tughlaq. He was noted for his charity and has been compared with Bali.[15] The date of his accession may be approximately fixed between 1353 and 1355 AD. Kameshwara had three sons of which Bhogishwara was the eldest. The name of his wife was Padma Devi.[16] Mithila tradition asserts that he died in 1360. There was some short of tussle for the throne after his death, but later on, good sense prevailed and his son Ganeshwara succeeded to the throne. He was a very brave and powerful king. His accession to the throne was not liked by his nephews and they, with the help of Kumar Arjuna Rai and Kumar Ratnakara, became instrumental in killing Ganeshwara.[17] This account again does not tally with our poet who says the one Arsalan (meaning brave) killed Ganeshwara. It is true that the forces of disintegration were again let loose during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq and the various chiefs took advantage of this situation. How to explain this dilemma? If Ganeshwara died as result of the civil war, Vidyapati might have concealed this particular fact to save the prestige of his patron, Kirti Singh, whom he compares with such great personalities as Bali, Krishna, Rama, Parasurama etc.[18] In those days of feudal ascendancy, it was difficult for the court poet to say or write anything that ran counter to the wishes of the masters. The doubt is further aroused when we find that he failed to give us the correct and full name of the Muslim ruler who killed Ganeshwara. It cannot be accepted that the poet did not know the full name of the Muslim malik, because our poet accompanied the aggrieved princes to Jaunpur and witnessed the successful conclusion of war against Arsalan. This conspicuous omission on the part of the poet, when he himself was a party to the whole show, excites suspicion. We are told that Ganeshwara was murdered by Malik Arsalan or Aslan in Laksmana Samvata 252 (=1371-72 AD) and since then he continued to rule over Mithila till he was finally routed by Ibrahim Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur.[19] The claim that Malik Aslan occupied Bihar and realised tribute from Tirhut[20] also lacks corroboration. Between 1370 and 1375, the frontiers of the Tughlaq Empire were secured by placing them under great Amirs and well-wishers of the Emperor. The fief of Bihar was given to Malik Bir Afghan who showed no laxity in coercing the insurgents of those parts and confiscating the territories of the frontiers.[21] These points reveal to us that here our poet has concealed the truth. We cannot preclude the possibility of a civil war after Ganeshwara. Malik Bir Afghan might have taken advantage of this

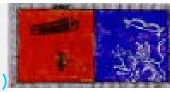
situation and extended his influence up to Tirhut. With no prospect of unity among themselves and the constant threat of permanent occupation of Mithila by the Muslim, Vira Singh and Kirti Singh saw no other alternative but to approach the Sharqi kingdom for help which they hoped to get for mere asking. Sharqi kingdom was also a rising kingdom and a timely help to Maithila refugee kings would certainly prove to be a source of strength to Sharqi dominion. Perhaps that was the motive which goaded Ibrahim Shah to take a lead in this matter and he succeeded in making Mithila his own dependency.

We find no corroboration of Vidyapati's contention that Ganeshwara was murdered by Arsalan. Another authority asserts that Ganeshwara was killed fighting either for Bengal or Delhi's cause.[22] The reason is that Ganeshwara, taking advantage of Firuz's weakness, is said to have asserted independence and though Tirhut became independent, Magadha remained under the control of Firuz. As we know from all available sources that Firuz's first invasion of Bengal only resulted in the confession of weakness and even the second Bengal invasion proved abortive. It once more exhibited his weak and vacillating nature.[23] With this record of failures in Bengal, he led his expedition against Sindh which again displayed lack of his military ability and tactics. All these circumstances might have emboldened the Maithila king to reassert his independence or his dependent status might have forced him to join Firuz Shah in his momentous campaign. Both these propositions are possible in the face of evidence that we have. If we accept Mithila tradition, then in that case, we may infer that his opponents took advantage of Firuz's weakness and killed Ganeshwara with a view to setting up Bhavesha or Bhava Singh. Even Vidyapati himself has accepted that Bhavesha or Bhava Singh ruled in Mithila.[24] The Mithila tradition is unanimous in asserting that Bhavesha ruled. On the authority of Mithila tradition, as given by Pandit Chanda Jha, Grierson concluded that Bhogishwara divided the kingdom with his brother Bhava to be re-united again under Siva Singh.[25] Hari Singh and Tripurara Singh, sons of Bhavesha, have been represented as enemies of Kirti Singh whom the latter killed and got back his kingdom.[26] Jayaswal also contends that Bhavesha ruled after 1370.[27] Mm M M Chakravarti has made the confusion worst confounded by placing Vira Singh and Kirti Singh before Bhavesha as kings of Mithila. As we know from the **Kirtilata**, Kirti Singh was made king by Ibrahim Shah Sharqi who came to the throne after 1401 AD. At the time of Ganeshwara's death they were mere child and it does not seem probable that they ruled in succession in the face of Bhava Singh, supported by his two strong sons who had been responsible for this new political set up. There is no possibility of the rule of these two brothers, ruling before the time of Ibrahim Shah. Bhava Singh has been mentioned by such eminent writers as Chandesvara[28], Vacaspati Mishra and Misaru Mishra. Even the latest joint Editors of Vidyapati[29] have proposed that Bhogishwara and Bhavesha ruled during the same time and they thereby accept the division of Kingdom between the two sharers. I wonder how they could fail to trace out the identity of Arsalan. They have tried to show that Arsalan destroyed both these branches of Kameshwara dynasty and in support of this they point out that Vidyapati has not used the epithet Raja for Deva Singh in **Bhuparikrama**. How does it solve the problem? Deva Singh had been called a Nrpati and some poems had been composed in his name.[30] The fact is that Bhava Singh had a fairly long reign. Mithila was passing through a critical stage and even before Ibrahim Shah, it had been sacked by Khwaja Jahan, who brought it under his control.[31] The weakness of Mithila was the main cause of frequent foreign invasion. On the basis of above discussion, it appears that after 1371-72 AD some sort of anarchy prevailed in Mithila.[32] If the cause of Ganeshwara's death was the fatricidal war, then it is likely that his supporters might have tried to create anarchical condition. A

glance over the medieval history of India will show that such fratricidal wars for succession to the throne was not very uncommon in those days and Mithila did not prove to be an exception.

Vidyapati's outlook was thoroughly conservative owing to his association with the court. A critical and penetrating study of **Kirtilata** will speak of his outlook towards the Muslim. In those days when Muslims were looked upon with hatred, because they were conquerors, our poet thought it wiser to throw the entire blame of Ganeshwara's murder on a Muslim Malik, whose name he seems to have intentionally suppressed and thereby concealed the real fact because the true statement of facts would have marred the beauty of a **prasasti** (i.e., in **Kirtilata**). We should also note here that he is silent about the partition of the kingdom though he accepts both Bhava Singh and Deva Singh as rulers. Now if Arsalan ruled Mithila after the alleged murder, then how could Bhava Singh and Deva Singh rule? Thus indirectly he supports our contention that these two must have ruled after Ganeshwara (if the alleged murder incident be true) or during the life time of Bhogishwara (if the question of partition be accepted). His main aim was to idealise the father of his hero, Kirti Singh and therefore he tried to show that with him (Ganeshwara) vanished all the good qualities. Giving due discount to hyperbolic expression, it is reasonable to accept that all round deterioration came in the wake of political instability. I am inclined to believe that this Arslan was an imaginary character, found out by our poet to cover up the rotten atmosphere of the court which had culminated in the murder of Ganeshwara. Political instability and internal strife enabled the Muslims to make frequent inroad into the country and when Vira Singh and Kirti Singh came of age, they took upon themselves the responsibility of freeing and making Mithila strong.

Mithila tradition asserts that when Vira Singh and Kirti Singh came of age, they went to Delhi and with the help of Firuz got back their kingdom[33], while **Kirtilata** gives us a different version altogether. It is quite likely that before going to Ibrahim Shah, they tried their luck with the king of Bengal and lastly with the Tughlaq king of Delhi. All these are evident from various references to Muslim kings in the **Padavali**. When they failed, they went to Jaunpur. Bengal was the next door neighbour of Mithila and as such an approach for help in times of crisis cannot be possibly ruled out. In poem No. 2 of the **Padavali**[34] Ghiyasdeva is referred to as **Surtana**. This king may be identified with Ghiyasuddin Azam of Bengal, who ruled from 1389 to 1409 AD. Why did Vidyapati dedicate a song to this Muslim king? Before proceeding to Delhi or Jaunpur, these two brothers approached Ghiyasuddin Azam of Bengal, a very attractive figure in Bengal history. He is said to have been a very fast friend of Hafiz but its authenticity is disputed.[35] It seems probable that Ghiyasuddin Azam impressed Vidyapati by his personality and he composed a poem to please the Sultan. Alam Shah, referred to in Nagendra Gupta's **Padavali**[36], is said to have got a similar poem composed in his name. About this Alam Shah also, there is a lot of confusion. Dr Sahidullah, placing reliance on Jayaswal's researches, has placed Alam Shah in the middle of the 15th century.[37] If that be accepted, then we have to note that Alam was the title of the son of Muhammad (Saiyad dynasty) and not the name. Alam Shah ruled within the forty miles of Delhi between 1444 and 1448 AD. He was a feeble minded and mean spirited king.[38] In Mithila, a tradition is current that Vidyapati went to Delhi to secure the release of Siva Singh but there is no solid historical basis behind this statement. Besides, Siva Singh cannot be a contemporary of this king of Delhi. If this is not the case, the chances of Vidyapati's visit to Delhi do not arise. This Alam Shah was not so renowned a king as to



attract Vidyapati's attention. There must have been one such Alam Shah with whom Vidyapati came into contact or must have heard about him. Simply the word 'Shah' should not confuse us with the fact that he was a king. It has been said above that Vidyapati visited Ghiyasdeva's court with a begging bowl for help in restoring status quo in Mithila and it will not be out of place to suggest that in his poem, he referred to Saint Alam Shah, who lived during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Azam.[39] His full name was Nur Qutub Alam, son of Ala-ul-Haque, a noted saint. He was a friend of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam and our poet must have been impressed with his personality.

It appears that Vidyapati's political mission at Bengal did not succeed. Therefore they (the poet and the two princes) might have proceeded to Delhi for help. The Tughlaq dynasty had helped the ancestors of Kirti Singh in becoming kings and Firuz had addressed his grandfather as 'dear friend'. This old tie of friendship might have encouraged them to go to Delhi for help in getting themselves re-established once again on the throne of Mithila. In 1394 Khwaja Jahan, Malik-us-Sarq (or Lord of the East) had subjugated the fiefs of Bihar and Tirhut. The extension of his influence in Tirhut perhaps goaded the Tirhut refugee kings to seek help from the decaying Tughlaq Empire, when they failed in their mission at Bengal. Tughlaq Empire itself was, then, in a process of political disintegration. With the help of Amirs and nobles, Nasrat Khan, grandson of Firuz Tughlaq, was declared king. He assumed the title of Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah and it seems that Vidyapati composed poems in his name also. There seems to have been a division of kingdom between Nasrat Shah and Muhammad Shah.[40] Nasrat Khan ruled between 1394 and 1399. Nasrat Shah has been referred to as Rai Nasrat Shah.[41] Here we should not confuse him with Nasrat Shah of Bengal. Here at Delhi too, they failed in their mission as the House of Tughlaq was divided and it was on the point of dwindling as a house of cards. The invasion of Timur had added fuel to the fire of political instability. Thus, being disappointed both at Bengal and Delhi, they had no option but to knock at the doors of Jaunpur, the rising Sharqi kingdom, for help. As stated above, the Sharqi king helped them because an alliance with Mithila was important both from political and strategic points of view. Sharqi's help was a living example of the farsighted statesmanship of Ibrahim Shah, the greatest king of this line.

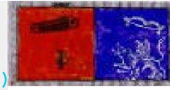
Let us now discuss here the identity of another Muslim king named Nasir Shah. We cannot adduce any more argument in the present state of knowledge. The difficulty is that certain writers have confused Nasrat Shah with the descendants of Allauddin Shah but even a layman cannot believe that Vidyapati lived for 150 years or so. Nasir Shah should be identified with the grandson, Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah (1442-1459), of Haji Ilyas. Why Vidyapati in his old age dedicated his poems to this Muslim king would certainly remain a mystery till further evidence on this point is forthcoming. The title '**Panch Gaudeswara**' signifies that he was a powerful ruler.[42] One thing may be remembered in this connection. After **Kirtilata**, wherein Vidyapati compares Ibrahim with God, he has nowhere mentioned any Sharqi ruler. It seems that the successive Sharqi invasion of Mithila produced some sort of hatred in poet's mind and that is why, he left Sharqi king out of picture in his poems. The exhaustion of Sharqi power and the consolidation of the Bengal kingdom under Nasir Shah whose liberality was well known, enthused the poet. The fact that Bhagalpur[43] was included in his kingdom, suggests that he held sway over a part of Mithila and our poet was right in calling him **Panch Gaudeswara**. Nasir's qualities of head and heart might have given some amount of confidence to the poet. The regular contact between Mithila and

Bengal had drawn the two States closer and made them so friendly that the occupation of any part of Mithila by Bengal's king did not mean much though the same action by any other Muslim ruler of the West was generally taken to be humiliating. The title ascribed to Nasir Shah hints at the possibility of his domination over a part of Mithila. While Vidyapati used the terms **Surtana** for Ghiyasdeva, has used **Panch Gaudeswara** for Nasir Shah and this distinction clearly gives us the real position of the two rulers.

Vidyapati has given us a graphic description of the kingdom of Jaunpur and also the traits of culture then obtaining there. It has been pointed out that Vira Singh followed Ganeshwara and the former again was followed by his brother Kirti Singh.[44] But the arguments set forth above, clearly prove that such was not the case, and we have no positive evidence to show that Vira Singh ever sat on throne. Scholars have been misled by the epithet Maharaja used for Vira Singh but that should not confuse us because we find such laudatory praises for patrons in various works of court poets. Mr Chakravarti rightly observed, "Even with this title it is doubtful if he was the king, for even ministers like Chandesvara and Ramdatta had been given this title in the colophons of their works."[45] Even Mithila tradition fails to support the argument that Vira Singh ever became a king. It appears that Vira Singh predeceased his brother and thus paved the way for Kirti Singh's rule.

At Jaunpur, Kirti Singh acquainted Ibrahim Shah[46] with the chaotic political condition of Mithila and prevailed upon him the necessity of his intervention against Arslan or usurper, whoever he might have been. As I have pointed above, this Arslan is nothing more than a fiction, and the real enemy might have been Bhava Singh or his other cousins. In the present state of our knowledge, it is better to leave the matter unsettled. Here we have simply to know that Ibrahim Shah granted their prayer. He was shrewd enough to understand the implication of this help and he took advantage of this godsend opportunity without allowing the grass to grow under his feet. The political condition of Jaunpur was such as to call for an alliance like the present one. He was surrounded on all sides by rival states and therefore his necessity was also greater. A thorough evaluation of the Sharqi history proves that Ibrahim was one of the greatest kings of medieval India who rightly valued political alliance even with the Hindu king. Caste in politics had lost all significance and it was the political interest which moulded the policy of the state, be it Hindu or Muslim. Ibrahim Shah ordered his army to march against Tirhut.

Ibrahim's army reached Tirhut probably between 1402 and 1404 because after that he remained engaged with Delhi. Qazi Khwaja and Makhdum[47] were fighting on behalf of Ibrahim. It seems that in his campaign against Tirhut, he was also helped by Manohar Raja, whose army marched towards Tirhut.[48] Under Malik Muhammad Gani, the Sharqi army crossed the Gandak.[49] The two armies met in the field of Raipur where Arslan is said to have been defeated.[50] The names, mentioned above, remain to be verified even now and the place may be identified on the basis of the routes followed by the Sharqi kings. To me, it seems that he must have followed the traditional route of his predecessors. A thorough search for these names in the Muslim and other source books will certainly bring out more historical facts. After entering Tirhut, Ibrahim Shah occupied the throne.[51] After defeating the enemy and putting an end to the anarchical condition, Ibrahim made Kirti Singh the king of Mithila.[52] It is evident that the ceremonies of his accession to the throne were celebrated in presence of Ibrahim Shah. This points to his subordinate vassal status. Since then Mithila continued to be under the tutelage of the Sharqi

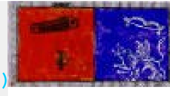


kingdom for a considerable period. Kirti Singh might have ruled between 1402 and 1410 AD. After Kirti Singh we come to the greatest and the most well known king of this dynasty, Siva Singh.

Siva Singh was the greatest king of this dynasty. He occupies a prominent place in the history of north-eastern India in general and Mithila in particular. He succeeded in bringing about unity in Mithila. The exact length of his reign is not known. He must have begun to rule before 1410 AD.[53]There is a lot of confusion among the scholars about the authentic date of Siva Singh, son of Deva Singh. It is contended that the manuscript of the **Kavyaprakash-Viveka**, giving us the date (1410 AD or 291 LS), has also given rise to certain confusion. Siva Singh was the son and successor of Deva Singh Garudanarayan, who represented the elder line.[54] He is said to have died in Saka era 1324 and LS 293. These two dates are conflicting and no reliance can be placed on these dates until the last word is said on the LS era and its corresponding eras used in Mithila in those days. Mithila tradition asserts that Siva Singh began to take active part in administrative matters at a very early age of fifteen. The same source tells us that Kirti Singh died childless and therefore Siva Singh could unite both parts of the kingdom.[55] As the colophon of the **Kavya-prakasha** is the only authoritative source of Siva Singh's date, we may assume with some amount of certainty that he ascended the throne in 1410 AD. Deva Singh retired in favour of his son because he was too old to carry on. Siva Singh had a very short reign.

Vidyapati has dedicated a large number of his poems to Siva Singh and wrote his famous **Purusapariksa** at his instance. According to Vidyapati, Siva Singh was the eleventh incarnation of God, incarnation of Siva, powerful monarch and **Mithilabhupa**.[56] **Kirtipataka** also contains praise for this monarch. This work, originally discovered by Mm H P Sastri, is eloquent about Siva Singh's prowess.[57] From all local sources, it is evident that Siva Singh was a powerful ruler.[58] He is said to have made Mithila an independent state. This is further corroborated by the fact that he issued gold coins.[59] Though he had a very short reign, he won victories against some Muslim kings, whose identification is still a problem in the history of Mithila. As the name of no Muslim ruler is given, scholars have conjectured certain possible names. We have to bear in mind that the whole of India in the first half of the 15th century was in a process of political disintegration and all ambitious kings aspired to fish in the troubled waters. Delhi had just heaved a sigh after Timur's invasion and was entangled with certain native powers. Ibrahim Shah remained busy with Delhi from 1405 to 1416[60], Bengal was also passing through political convulsions. The opportunity was thus ripe for an ambitious prince to take a lead in asserting independence. A wise and successful ruler like Siva Singh did not fail to grasp the situation and made bold attempt by striking gold coins.

With this background of political situation then obtaining in northern India, we shall pass on to discuss his relations with the contemporary Muslim rulers. He was a great hero and led a victorious campaign against Gauda and Gazzana.[61] The period, under review, was one of ups and downs in the history of northern India and every aspirant for imperial power was always in search of such opportunities as might help them in doing so. It has been asserted that the kings of Gauda and Gazzana came to war with huge armies driving many huge elephants but Siva Singh defeated them. Like Mithila, Bengal was also passing through a period of political instability and it is very likely that Siva Singh might have weighed his arms against Gauda. The murder of Ghiyasuddin was followed by Saifuddin Hamza Shah (1409-1410) who took the title of Sultan-us-Salatin or king of kings. It brought in its train violent civil war.[62] Raja

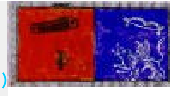


Ganesh took advantage and usurped the throne. After him, his eldest son, who turned a Muslim, Jalaluddin (Jadusena) came to the throne. He seems to have been a contemporary of Siva Singh. His only object of leading an expedition against Gauda must have been to extend his political sway in that part. As Jalaluddin himself was the son of a former feudal chief, Siva Singh thought of conquering this newly converted Muslim king. He might have done so to conquer Bengal and make it a Hindu province. He is said to have defeated Jalaluddin[63] and annexed some portion of his kingdom.[64]

Dr Mazumdar has tried to show that Siva Singh helped Ganesh in suppressing Hamza Shah and Bayazid Shah.[65] According to Vidyapati, Siva Singh acquired fame by defeating Gaudesvara. Dr Mazumdar's contention is not fully convincing because he became king in 1409-1410 AD, perhaps a year earlier than Siva Singh. It does not seem probable that on the very year of his accession, Siva Singh could have taken such a bold step. The Maithil king, in collaboration with other local Hindu chiefs, seems to have defeated Jalaluddin because ha had taken up Islam even after his being purified according to Hindu rites. Mithila was the only Hindu kingdom and that is why Siva Singh seems to have taken upon himself the task of extending the influence of Hindu religion, and at the same time, of saving it from utter ruin at the hands of the Muslim. In so far as the protection of Dharma is concerned, our poet compares him with Rama.[66] There is no possibility of Ibrahim Shah coming over to this side (i.e., up to Mithila and Bengal) as he was engaged with Delhi between 1405 and 1416 AD. We are told that he had some tussle with Sharqi kingdom in which Ibrahim Shah was defeated.[67] As we have shown above, Ibrahim did not personally come over to this side during his reign. Probably his representative, deputed by him, went to suppress the rising in Bengal and on return tried to bring under control Siva Singh, who had assumed independence and had struck gold coins. Gajjanesvara here implied the Muslim king and not the king of Ghazni[68] as held by some scholars. "Gajjan" is used probably in the form of an epithet for the Sharqi king or his representative. In Mithila tradition[69] we are told that he began to rule independently and therefore he had some differences with the Nawab of Bihar. He must have been the representative of Sharqi kingdom. The fact of Mithila's independence under Siva Singh is proved by the events following his death. Had Mithila been a dependent state on Sharqi kingdom, there was no necessity of any further invasion against that state.

In course of his struggle against the Muslim power, he is said to have been killed or defeated. His minister, Amritkar[70], went to Patna and settled everything with the Muslim chief. There is no doubt that Siva Singh was one of the greatest kings of Mithila. Though his reign was very short, he has left a halo behind his name and has been immortalised by Vidyapati. His Viruda was Rupanarayana. A powerful king, a great administrator and a great general, a patron of learning and art, Siva Singh is noted for his benevolent activity and catholicity of spirit. Though a stern Hindu, he did his best for his Muslim subjects. Though much legend has centred round this attracting and charming king, a thorough and scientific search is bound to throw more light on his career and achievements and his relation with contemporary powers. No last word can be uttered on the merits and demerits of this great Oinvara king, who may rightly be called the last of the great Hindu kings of north eastern India.

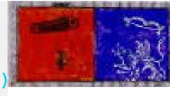
The eclipse of Siva Singh's power gave a signal for the total disintegration of the house of the Oinvara and also for the gradual but complete occupation of Mithila by the Muslim. After his defeat, his family members, under the care of Vidyapati, shifted to a village Raja-banauli in Nepal, where Siva Singh's

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friend Puraditya 'Arjun Vijayee' was ruling.[71] Here again the traditional account is conflicting. From **Likhnavali** it is evident that Puraditya had carved out an independent kingdom or a Janapada in Saptari after having slain his enemy Arjun. He is called Dronawar Mahipati.[72] He defeated all his enemies.[73] We have discussed about the local tradition of a civil war for the throne between the two branches of Kameshwara dynasty. Bhava Singh's son, Tripura Singh, has also been associated with the murder of Ganeshwara.[74] Arjun Singh was the son of Tripura Singh. Perhaps the family feud was at the root of this trouble and taking advantage of this ugly situation, Puraditya succeeded in killing him and in creating for himself a small independent Janapada in Saptari, a district in the Nepal territory. Arjun is mentioned in the **Ram Bhadrapur manuscript**[75] and one Amara is mentioned in the **Padavali**.[76] Both Arjun and Amara were sons of Tripura Singh. Ashoka pillar at Lauriya Nandanagarh in Champaran contains an inscription[77] dated VS 1556 (1499 or 1500 AD) which reads **Nrpanarayana Suta Amar Singh**. This Amar Singh is no other than brother of Arjun Singh. These two brothers were probably local chieftains and were defeated by Puraditya. After Arjun, Amar exercised some political power and that is evident from the above inscription. They all beling to the same dynasty and hence Vidyapati's occasional references to these princes are not unnatural.

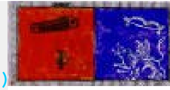
The word बन्धौनृशंसायिनः is still controversial. Mm Umesh Mishra thinks that Arjun was a Buddhist and was ruling in Saptari. It is said that when Vidyapati reached Puraditya's capital and got dug a tank and called a meeting of the learned Panditas to celebrate a Yajna, the Buddhists of Arjun's kingdom created disturbance. That led to war between Arjun and Puraditya. Arjun was defeated and Saptari Pargana was conquered by Puraditya.[78] He has not cared to give any authentic source in support of his argument and hence no credence can be given to this conclusion arrived at by the learned scholar. There is no room for any doubt to accept that Arjun[79] was a son of Tripura Singh. What seems probable is that before going to Puraditya, Vidyapati tried to seek shelter with Arjun and when he did not see any chance of getting an asylum there, he went to Siva Singh's friend Puraditya. As is evident from Vidyapati's activities, he did not feel happy and anyhow spent his time there. His genius was directed towards writing sample letters for ordinary persons and in copying out the **Bhagavata**.[80] He could not produce any original work of repute.

From the term बन्धौनृशंसायिनः it appears that Arjun's behaviour towards his kinsman was cruel. That supports our contention. He belonged to a branch of the Oinvaras, whose record is not praiseworthy and whose descendant could never get a chance to rule. In keeping with the tradition of his father Tripura Singh, he showed scant respect to his cousin's wife Lakshima, when she needed help after Siva Singh's arrest and under the circumstances she took shelter with Puraditya. Another scholar Dr Sukumar Sen has used बौद्धौः in place of बन्धौ to suit his own argument[81], but he has emphatically pointed out that they were not Buddhist. Though attempt has been made to prove that this Arjun was Jayarjuna of Nepal, there is no evidence to support this point. According to Bendall, Jayarjuna died in Nepal Samvat 502 (1382 AD).[82] While Vidyapati's **Likhnavali** could not have been written earlier than LS 299 (1417-18 AD). Thus there is no possibility of identifying Jayarjuna with Arjun of **Likhnavali**. Even if we accept the story, presented by Mm Mishra, it may be interpreted in this way – when the Buddhist influenced subjects of Saptari began to disturb the Yajna, Arjun instigated them to do so as he had no respect for his cousin. He



was ultimately killed. The word बन्धौ (not बौद्धौ of Sen) indicates the intemperate and cruel behaviour of Arjun against his kinsman. This is not very unnatural in those days when personal interest superseded all other considerations.

Mithila tradition asserts that after Siva Singh, Padma Singh again accepted Muslim sovereignty. He is said to have ruled for 6 years and founded new cities.[83] He was the younger brother of Siva Singh and was like Bhima in the battle.[84] No authentic history about this king is known. He has also been mentioned in one of his poems.[85] After him came Hari Singh.[86] There are conflicting evidences about the successors of Siva Singh and we cannot arrive at any definite conclusion unless further evidence is forthcoming. Mm Parameshwara Jha[87] has identified this king with Hara Singh mentioned in the **Purusa-Pariksa** but this is untenable in the face of the fact that i) Gorakhpur king Udaya Singh cannot be a contemporary of this king, ii) Kalanidhi, in his remark has used the past, iii) **Purusa-Pariksa** was written during the time of Siva Singh and it cannot relate a story of incident which took place after his reign. We stand on a better footing with regard to Narsingh, son and successor of Hari Singh. Narsingh's virud was Darpanarayana. He has been mentioned by Vidyapati, Vacaspati Mishra, Ruchipati and Vardhamana.[88] His date can also be ascertained on the basis of the Kandaha inscription in the district of Saharsa.[89] Here also we are confronted with a serious problem of date and as stated above these difficulties are bound to be there till the question of Laksmana Sena era is not finally settled. He was succeeded by Dhira Singh Kansanarayana.[90] He was succeeded by his younger brother Bhairava Singh, whose viruda was Rupanarayana and Harinarayana. He is said to have subjugated the lord of Panchagauda.[91] He has been compared with Karna and has been called **Bhumipal Siromani**.[92] A lot of confusing sources does not enable us to arrive at any conclusion about Bhairava Singh and his connection with Kedar Roy of Bengal stands problematic. Vidyapati's account of the Oinvara ends practically with the reign of Dhira Singh or Bhairava Singh.



CHAPTER XII

THE LATER OINVARAS

The regular line of the Oinvaras of Mithila came to an end in AD 1526 but the dynasty continued to enjoy the privileges of a **Babuana** and held some zamindari effects in a part of Tirhut. The question of their being important in political field has come up for reconsideration in view of the discovery of a **Firman** few years back. The point needs fresh discussion also because the very existence of the **Kirtilata**[1] of Vidyapati (on which I based my study of the Oinvaras two and a half decades back) has been challenged by the late Professor Ramanath Jha. I would, therefore, take up first the points raised by Professor Jha and then pass on to discuss the historical importance of the **Firman**.

I

Let us first take up the points raised by Ramanath Jha. His main contentions are:

1. "There is the political turmoil that prevailed in Mithila in the early days of the Oinvara rule but the course of events described here does not tally with what is otherwise known from history."[2] (Introduction, p.7)
2. "....**Kirtilata** is no more than a story built upon some historical facts (p.22). ....broad facts are historical but they are only a few ....historical romance...." (p.37).
3. ....There were two branches of the Oinvara family (p.21): a) one headed by **Bhogisvara** (eldest son); and b) Other headed by **Bhavasimha** (youngest son).

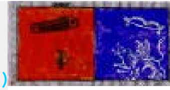
All references to the involvement of Arjuna and his accomplices have been scrupulously eschewed.

"....nothing authentic about the children of Raja Pandit Kamesvara" (p.8).

"....Ganesvara's coronation took place between 1364 and 1371 – There was chaos only for four or five years" (p.15). (There was chaos in Tirhut for more than thirty years).

....Bhogisvara's younger brother got the Raj partitioned. After Bhogisvara's death Bhavasimha's grandson Arjuna Ray and Harshana's grandson Ratnakara **hatched a conspiracy and got Ganesvara treacherously murdered**. After this, Arjuna was killed and his line became extinct. The Raj went thereafter to Devasimha who named Sivasimha as his regent when he was only sixteen. ....After the overthrow of Bhogisvara's line Sivasimha took possession of entire Tirhut. ....

Bhavasimha resolved the crisis created by the Brahmin rule in Mithila. ....Chandesvara suggested that sovereignty does subsist even when sovereign has to pay tribute to an overlord, and that for royalty



coronation is not necessary. ....Oinvara rule was constitutionally recognised by the society with Bhavasimha and his descendants. .....

....**Chaos and confusion which resulted in the assassination of Ganesvara had its origin in the fratricidal conflict between Bhogisvara and Bhavasimha and their descendants. Arslan might have been an agent.**

....Sivasimha represented the branch associated with the murder of Ganesvara. ....Ibrahim also wanted to subdue him as he had assumed sovereign power. .... Sivasimha was defeated by Ibrahim Shah. ....Kirtisimha might have forfeited public support for having brought about the downfall of Sivasimha, might have ruled for sometime unnoticed.... (pp. 15-20). (Sivasimha was defeated in 1405-6).

....Kirtilata is the glorification of his (Kirtisimha's) patience, perseverance, determination and sense of self-respect (p. 20). ....wrote a panegyric for Ibrahim Shah and glorified Kirtisimha. ....presented it to him (Ibrahim Shah) and got it recited before him. Ibrahim was pleased to let the Raj remain undisturbed with a renewed oath of allegiance to Jaunpur. ....having thus achieved his objective he (Vidyapati) returned to Raja Banauli and returned after twelve years as a changed man.

....Broad facts are historical but they are only a few.... (pp. 34-37).

These are, in brief, the findings of Ramanath Jha in his study of the **Kirtilata**. He describes it as a panegyric on the one hand and a class of **Purusartha** Literature (p. 37) on the other. The broad facts are clear that the murder was due to fratricidal intrigue hatched by the two princes. One may or may not agree with his findings but the fact remains that Vidyapati was an active participant in the then political drama and as an arch nationalist himself he cannot be charged with flattering Ibrahim Shah at any cost. We have no evidence yet to show that Kirtisimha ruled after Sivasimha though the former might have been responsible for the defeat of the latter. As the matter stands, Vidyapati left Tirhut after the disappearance of Sivasimha.

Kamesvara was not an independent ruler since he affirmed his loyalty to the Tughlaqs. We know that Haji Ilyas had divided Tirhut into two parts – area north of Gandaka was left with the Hindu rulers of Tirhut and south of it was placed under his own rule. Firuz Tughlaq reunited the two parts under his own hegemony.[3] Firuz's attempt was nothing more than a reassertion of Tughlaq authority in Tirhut.[4] Mulla Taquia gives an altogether different account and describes Deva Simha as dispossessed ruler and Sivasimha in league with Kamsarai of Bengal.[5]

My own feeling is that it was in the interest of the Muslimrulers both of the east and the west to keep the rulers of Tirhut in good humour. This is why the Tughlaqs had befriended the Oinvaras by giving them autonomy, the Sharqis had dabbled in the politics of Mithila as cautiously as they could, and the Muslim rulers of Bengal wanted to bring them into their fold simply to keep them away from their Hindu opponents. The politics in the whole of eastern India, in those days, was just like a game of hide and seek. The Tirhut rulers followed the policy of **Vetasvrtti**. Since Sivasimha took charge of administration

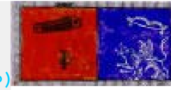
and royalty as crown prince at an early age of sixteen, it is he who fought against various Muslim rulers for the preservation of the independence of Mithila and rightfully assumed the title of Panch-Gaudesvara.

We have no definite information about the rule of Birasimha and Kirtisimha and how Vidyapati came to espouse the cause of Kirtisimha in preference to others is yet a mystery. Vidyapati's association with Sivasimha is well known and as a participant in the then political struggle for the integrity and independence of Mithila, it does not sound well to suggest that he wrote **Kirtilata** in praise of Ibrahim Shah, when he did not do so in praise of his patron Raja of Banauli. How, why and when did Vidyapati switched over to Sivasimha (associated with the branch of conspirators) has not been delineated by Ramanath Jha who has placed the rule of Kirtisimha after Sivasimha. The whole assumption of Ramanath Jha is based on the preconceived notion of the fact that **Kirtilata** is not a work of Vidyapati, the great poet. But even here, he is not emphatic enough and swings like a pendulum between the two views of 'yes' and 'no'. It appears that Vidyapati, in his youthful vigour, might have espoused the cause of a victim like **Kirtisimha** and accompanied him to Jaunpur. By the time, Ibrahim Shah directed his march to Tirhut, Devasimha was dead and Sivasimha had assumed independence. Ibrahim defeated him but we do not know what happened to Kirtisimha because the history of Mithila after that episode is uncertain till the rise of Narasimha and Bhairavasimha.

II

The second issue that attracts notice in this regard is the discovery of **Firman** granted to the Oinvaras by the Mughals.[6] The main points of the **Firman**, as noted by Professor Hetukar Jha, are as follows:

i. The Choudharai of the parganas of Sarkar Tirhut attached to the **Subah** of Bihar, (**and a remuneration**) at the rate of one anna per bigha (and) five thousand bighas of land were granted **as Inam** to Raja Pratap Narain **on condition of performing the chieftainship and well-wishing** of the government. The grantee died (in course of time).
ii. In the meantime, Raja Rudra Narain, son of Raja Kirat Narain ....brought to the imperial notice that in accordance with the previous **Firman he had been continuing in the chieftainship** ....the exalted and obedience enforcing order is hereby issued that the **Rajai** and **Choudharai** of the parganas of the said sarkar (and the remuneration) at the rate of one anna per bigha may continue with the aforesaid Raja Rudra Narain (but) the five thousand bighas of land may be **resumed** to **Khalisa**. (The remuneration) one anna per bighs may be regarded as pertaining to his (Raja's) expenditure. He should behave himself and observe the established regulations and formalities and he should **in no way associate himself with prohibited actions**.
iii. **Amils**, **Jagirdars**, **Karoris** and **Fauzdars** should strive for the enforcement of this order and regard the aforementioned person as the permanent **Raja** and **Choudhary** of the said sarkar



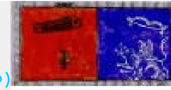
and render him all assistance in the performance of his official duties and **should not treat anyone as his partner or co-sharer** and render unto him (the income of) one anna per bigha. The **descendants of Gopal and Subhankar have no right in the above mentioned affairs nor should they be allowed any** (power of interference in future) – the grant is dated 1695 AD and bears the seal of Wazir Asad Khan.

The grant, under reference, is no doubt important in the sense that it creates a problem about the history of Mithila in relation to the Khandawalas. The grant is of a feudal nature. Remuneration at the rate of one anna per bigha is prescribed and five thousand bighas of land were granted as **Inam** to Kirat Narain. Here it is to be noted that lands held on the same basis as **Jagir** but not against any rank or with any obligation were known as **Inam**[7] – a privilege that was taken away in the time of Rudranarain and the five thousand bighas of land was resumed and restored to the **Khalisa**. Khalisa comprised the lands and sources of revenue preserved for the imperial treasury.[8] A radical change was brought in **Khalisa** administration under Akbar when all but three provinces were placed under it. Amil or Amalgazar, in-charge of district land, was known as **Karori** and the name **Karori** stuck to the **Amil** of the **Khalisa** set over a pargana or a group of parganas. The **Karori** also employed troopers for enforcing revenue collection. In the reign of Shahjahan, the practice of giving the revenue of whole pargana or large areas or farm seems to have been very rare in the **Khalisa**.

The Zamindars, under the Mughals, appear primarily as an official or tax gatherer rather than a tax payer. Two **firmans** of Jehangir confirming Zamindari speak of the right as a **Khidmat**, a post of service.[9] The Zamindar's service was paid for through an allowance known as **Nankar**, varying from five to ten percent. The title of **Choudhari** is given to some among the Zamindars who is trustworthy and **Zamindari** and **Choudharai** of certain **Tappas** are vested in one person. **Choudharai** occupied a crucial position in the machinery of revenue collection. Zamindars had revenue free lands in **Malikana** and **Nankar**.[10]

Bihar had a total of about 55,376 villages under the Mughals (almost equal to that counted in the census of 1881 AD. Zamindari rights in Bihar were recognised by the Mughal rulers for their own administrative convenience. No entries about Zamindars are put against Parganas. There are reference to some petitioners complaining to Imperial Court against usurpation in Bihar. Almost every Zamindar of any consequence had to report possession of armed retainers. The Zamindars acted as intermediaries between the peasants and the administrators and the burden of taxation fell mainly upon the peasants. With this short note on the contemporary system, let us now pass on to the background of the history of Tirhut after the Oinvaras. The **Firman**, under reference, is to be studied in the background of the contemporary history of Tirhut.[11]

The internal history of Tirhut after the fall of the Oinvaras is yet in the limbo of oblivion. Mulla Taquia suggests that from the fall of the Oinvaras to the rise of the Mughals, Tirhut was under the rule of the Pathans and according to Biharilal[12], the administration of Mithila was placed in the hands of a Kayastha named Kesava Mazumdar who consequently usurped power and ruled for eleven years between 1546-1557 AD. The period between 1527 and 1557 is one of the chaotic convulsions[13] in Mithila. Bhar Rajputs took advantage of the situation and asserted independence



and established their authority over a large part of Mithila against whom the Khandawala's had to wage war for years. The Bhars had their capital at Amaravati and Paksadhara Mishra occupied the position of Purohita. As a result of the dominance of the Bhars, many places in and around Amaravati came to be known as Bhanwara, Bhaur, Bhararisasen, Bharwara etc., and the Khandawalas had to struggle against the Bhara-Ksatriyas.

We learn from Bakshi[14] that the Khandawalas had in the beginning received help from the Bhara-Ksatriyas. When the Khandawalas acquired power, these Ksatriyas created some trouble but they were overpowered by Achyuta and Gopal and they had to leave. The struggle with the Bhars was a protracted affair. Subhankar Thakur shifted his residential and official headquarters to Bhaura, a past stronghold of the Bhars. As a brave and chivalrous ruler, he tided over the difficulties created by the Bhars. Let us now examine Khandawala's claim to Tirhut.

i. Mahesh Thakur was given **Malikana** by way of recognition of his being the Sadar Zamindar. The Privy Council judgement of 1785 described Darbhanga Raj as a principality and in support of this we may cite Sachal Misra's judgement (1795) as a point in favour.

ii. Singh (S N) has rightly suggested that if there is no mention of it in the **AINI-AKBARI**, there is also no mention of the fact as to how the internal administration of Tirhut was carried on.

iii. Princep[15] has rightly pointed out that the feudal character of Tirhut sovereign in pre-Muslim period and suggests that under the Mughal, Tirhut was made a Sarkar with seventy four Mahals and the largest known as 'Tirhut and Dependencies' was left with the Hindu Raja. The Raja remained in possession of the lands which composed his **Khalisa**. He was transformed into a Zamindar.

iv. Akbar's **Firman** to Gopal Thakur: **Choudharai** and **Kanungoi** of Sarkar Tirhut ....if he duly performs the said duty, he should realise from the ryots, the **Rusum Choudharai** of one **tanka** per bigha (**as against one anna** in the Oinvara Firman, under reference) and **Rusum Kanungoi** at one-fourth **tanka** per bigha ....they should not consider anyone as **sharing these powers with him**. (The combination of **Choudharai** and **Kanungoi** must have given him a position of vantage and power and excite jealousies of his enemies. Needless to say that he was a most favourite person of the emperor.[16])

v. The **Mazharnama** of Sunder Thakur dated 1652 AD mentions that **Sadar Choudharai** of Tirhut had been conferred upon Mahesh Thakur, founder of the Darbhanga Raj. He got a public appointment in the beginning.

vi. Narayan Thakur and Sunder Thakur had also received **Nankar** grants from Shahjahan.

vii. Under Mahinath and Narapati (sons of Sunder Thakur) the Khandawalas came into prominence from the favours they received from the imperial court.

viii. Aurangzeb granted 110 parganas in Suba Bihar and Bengal together with **Khillat** (robe of honour) and **Mahimaratib** (fish insignia) to Mahinath Thakur that raised the status of the House of Darbhanga (**Oinvara Firman** also belonged to the reign of Aurangzeb). The **Firmans** of 1665 and 1666 refer to the great assistance rendered by Mahinath to the imperial forces against Palamu and Morang.[17]

ix. These grants along with **Sadar Choudharai** and **Kanungoi** were made hereditary. ....the principle of indivisibility of the Estate came to be established under the East India Company.
x. Alivardi conferred the title of 'Raja' on Raghavasimha.

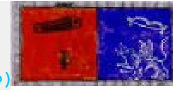
Let us now revert to the Oinvaras. The following points emerge out of the **Firman** under reference:

i. A **Firman** was possibly issued earlier to Keerat Narain; and
ii. Rudra Narain, son of Keerat Narain, was continuing in accordance with previous Firman.

It is a question of re-affirmation in case of Rudranarain but 5000 bighas of land of the earlier grant are to be resumed and restored to the Khalisa. In any case, the grant to Keerat Narain seems to have been made either in the reign of Shahjahan or Aurangzeb because it is the son of Keerat Narain who claims chieftainship on that basis. Here we have to keep in mind that Shahjahan and later on Aurangzeb confirmed the rights on the Khandawalas who, by that time, had become powerful and significant in the history of Tirhut and whose authority had come to be recognised. The mention of Gopal and Subhankar in this grant[18] shows that the reference is to the earlier period of the Khandawala rule when a struggle for supremacy was going on in Mithila between the Bhars, the Khandawalas and the Oinvaras.

As we have said earlier, the regular line of the Oinvaras came to an end in 1526 AD. The **Firman**, in question, was granted to a descendant of Harshana, younger brother of Kamesvara Thakur, the founder of the dynasty. Naturally, the irresistible conclusion is that Harshana might have got a **Khorisha** or a **Babuana** from Kamesvara and on the extinction of Kamesvara's line, his descendants might have claimed rule when Mithila was passing through a period of political instability. In a report submitted by Sitab Roy to the Patna Committee in 1772 on the office of the **Kanungoi** and **Choudharai** made by Akbar, it is said: "Todar Mal and Roy Mukund ....represented the case to His Majesty and procured the appointment of two in each pargana from among the most eminent of the zamindars ....to be the Choudharies on the part of the King. ....In the management of the collection of the Paragana, the zamindars and dependents were put under the direction of these Choudharies. ....They also appointed two Kanungoes."[19] It is possible that the line of Harshana might have claimed this right from the Mughals who were in search of loyal officers in new regions. But nothing definite is known to us authoritatively about the Oinvaras except what we get in the **Firman**. From the internal sources[20], we learn that the "state broke into pieces and territory owned by the Oinvaras was confined to a number of villages around the capital 'Sugaon' which till late continued to be in their possession in the form of zamindari."

The assertion that **Rajai** means **Kingship** is without any basis. It is a regular form of address in grants even to a minor fief holder and as such, should not confuse us. The traditional history of Mithila maintains a correct picture of the later Oinvaras and we should reconstruct history in that light. The great grandson of Harshana, Ratnakara, revolted against the regular line of the Oinvaras and declared Sugauna as an independent kingdom. He assumed the title of '**Raja**', a title that continued to be used invariably by his successors. His successors continued to hold the line in order and appear to have secured recognition of some Muslim rulers on the basis of which the Mughals granted a **Firman**. There were a number of zamindars in Tirhut and the dynasty of Harshana might have claimed regal title on the

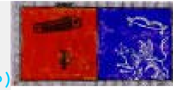
 

basis of being related to the royal line of the Oinvaras. The fact that they were given lesser rights and political authority by the Mughals will be evident if we make a comparative and critical study of the **Firman** issued to both of them. Some sort of conflict between the two houses (Khandawalas and Oinvaras) for recognition and power cannot be precluded.

Mukunda Jha Bakshi has pointed out that a descendant of the Oinvaras represented his case to the imperial court against the bestowal of the grant on Mahesh Thakur. **The Oinvaras got a grant of waste lands in Tirhut and that is why only one anna per bigha was fixed as remuneration.** They had regular troubles with the Khandawalas and Mahesh Thakur appears to have relinquished his post. When Achyuta Thakur, on representation, got his old right, the ryots were advised not to consider anyone sharing power with him as he was declared to be the sole official **Kanungo**. Similarly when descendants of Gopal and Shubhankar were required not to infer with the rights of the Oinvaras, the implication is clear that **the waste land granted to them** (at the rate of one anna per bigha) **should not be interfered with by anyone else**. He (the Oinvara grantee) is further advised not to associate himself with the prohibited actions. A critical study of the grants to the Khandawalas and the lone Firman to the Oinvaras would convince even a lay reader that the rights of the Khandawalas were superior to those of the Oinvaras.

During the confusion that followed the decline of the Oinvaras, the ruler of Makwanpur annexed a portion of Mithila together with Janakpur to his kingdom. Narapati Thakur made a representation to the Subedar of Patna as the previous Tirhut rulers had failed to effect their restoration. Makwanpur was a petty chieftainship in the Nepal Terai and, taking advantage of the weakness of Mithila, was extending its authority right and left. The Patna representative of the Mughal government authorised the Khandawalas to proceed against the over-ambitious Makwanpur state. The Khandawalas surprised the Makwanpur king unawares and arrested him. He was brought to Darbhanga and presented to the Fauzdar.[21] He agreed to pay annual Nazrana to Mahinath Thakur, under whose rule the Khandawalas acquired immense prestige and political status. We, nowhere, come across any reference to the Oinvaras in this context. Had they been powerful enough they must have come to the aid of the Khnadawalas against Makwanpur. The Oinvaras again come into picture a little later.

A **Mazharnama** of Raja Madhav Singh contains the following account[22]: “Nawab Mahabat Jang led an expedition against Raja Raghavasimha and expelled him out of the country. Meanwhile, Roopnarain, the zamindar of Parganas Bachchaur, Pariharpur Jabdi and Khund **presented himself to the Nawab and obtained the said parganas**. Through some intermediary Raghavasimha recovered the said Sarkar. ....Roopnarain was confined to imprisonment because he had misappropriated the revenues. He sold the Parganas to Mir Ghulam Hussain, returned the money and got himself released. Since Roopnarain failed to pay consideration money, he was dispossessed of the said parganas and Mir Ghulam disposed it to the agent of Raghava Singh.”[23] We learn further that Zainuddin was at Bhanwrah in 1745. Roopnarain (of the Oinvara dynasty) again raised the issue of pargana Bachchaur. He was already in the service of the Nawab, after being dispossessed of his possessions, and was staying at Murshidabad. Narendra was invested with **Khillat** and granted Sarkar of Tirhut. On being persuaded by the Nawab, he agreed to return pargana Bachchaur to Roopnarain **on condition of his remaining faithful and loyal to him**.[24] Narendra Singh had good relation with the Nawab[25] and therefore he enjoyed a number of

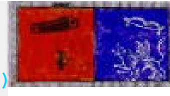


privileges. We further learn from the proceedings of a meeting of the Patna Council (11-5-1778) that on the accession of Mahabat Jang to the Subedari, Narendra Singh was confirmed in various privileges through a **Sanad**. Narendra's widow had to pay the zamindar of Bachchaur an annual **nazrana**.

The question of pargana arose again during the reign of Madhav Singh. The Raja of Bachchaur asserted his **malikana** right. Roopnarain's son, Fatehnarain, submitted a statement claiming **malikana** right over the villages of Jayanagar, Karahia, Chichri and obtained a **Sanad**. Madhav Singh filed a petition against it and Fatehnarain was restrained from taking possession. Madhav Singh ultimately won. George Arbuthnot, Collector of Darbhanga, had the following to say about Fatehnarain: "Raja Fatehnarain is an elderly man but can scarcely be said to be civilised. His habitation is in the heart of a thick jungle out of which he seldom or ever emigrates. ....He declared that **neither he nor his family had for generation had any concern with the revenue of his zamindari**, that he could not now enter into engagements, but was hopeful of being confirmed in his ancient rights. **He holds nine Nankar villages** since the year 1161 Fasli **under a Sanad** of the Mahabat Jang. ...." Fatehnarain had met the Collector in connection with the settlement of his zamindari. In his letter to the Collector of Darbhanga on January 16, 1815, Major Rouglesedge (in the reign of Chattra Singh whose territory extended up to Jayanagar) said, "I have to enclose copy of a letter I have received from **Raja Giridhar Narain of Bachchour, which affords another proof of worthlessness, almost amounting to disaffection**, of the great landholders of Tirhut, with single exception of the Raja of Darbhanga whose inclinations are laudable.[26] ...." We further learn that Giridhar Narain was the ruler of **Chapahi** estate. A part of this estate was later annexed to the Darbhanga Raj and half of it was owned by one of his descendants (brother's successors) named Khojendra Narain Singh.[27]

Thus a study of the various sources reveal to us that the **successors to the house of the Oinvaras (after 1526) were the descendants of Harshana**.[28] Eighth in descent from Harshana, Raja Keerat Narain and his son Raja Rudranarain were the recipient of the **Firman** from Aurangzeb. From Rudranarain onwards, the successors are seen enjoying power either as a **Babuana** or as a **Zamindar** in pargana Bachchaur and a few others. They were regularly in conflict with the Khandawalas on one score or the other but in all cases they continued to represent their claim to the respective authorities. What actually was the nature of the grant given to Rudranarain in face of specific grant to Mahinath Thakur we are not in a position to determine but I am inclined to hazard the following conjecture.

The Mughal emperor thought it wise to keep the two prominent Brahmin families of Mithila satisfied so that they could be used for the benefit of the empire. The Khandawalas had no doubt a superior position as would be evident from the successive confirmation of their being in-charge of Sarkar Tirhut from the time of Akbar onwards. Which of the Mughals issued first grant to the Oinvaras we are not in a position to ascertain but when Rudranarain was given the grant, the facility of five thousand bighas of land was possibly withdrawn. Aurangzeb might have resumed this grant with the hope of winning all sections of the elites of Mithila. The area of the grant, with the right of **nankar** must have been in and around the pargana of Bachchaur as was claimed later by Raja Fatehnarain in his representation to the Collector of Darbhanga. It appears that by that time they had only nine **Nankar** villages and that also under a **Sanad** from Mahabat Jang. Fatehnarain does not seem to have been aware of the grant to the family made earlier by Aurangzeb. There is every reason to believe that though the Firman was issued, it



was possibly never executed in practice because the Oinvaras in the last decade of the seventeenth century had neither the means nor the strength to oppose the superior position of the Khandawalas. The '**Tirhut and Dependencies**' were granted to the Khandawalas and that constituted the core of **Sarkar Tirhut**. The appellation 'Sarkar Tirhut' or for that matter **Choudharai** and **Rajai** in the Oinvara grant are the usual features of a Firman – a form used in almost all the grants. The **firman** is to be studied in the background of one already referred in connection with Mahinath Thakur. The Mithila tradition maintains rather faithfully the fact of their (Oinvaras) being granted waste land by the Mughals. Had they really ruled after 1526 or had been in power (except in the capacity of a Babuana), the Mithila tradition must have maintained an account of their rule. There is a regular mention of their descendants in connection with the history of Mithila but they have been described as Zamindars of a small area around pargana Bachchaur, from where also they were almost driven out by Narendra Singh. If the **Firman**, under reference, has any value it has this that it indicates the recognition of the royalty of the **Oinvaras** even by the Mughals.[29]

Mukunda Jha Bakshi holds that the ruler of Sugauna-Chapahi developed friendship with the Mughal Fauzdar, Mirza Khan, who was instrumental in getting a **Firman** for him for the waste land area of Tirhut.[30] Bakshi is clear on the point that a sanad was granted to him. When he returned and put his claim over the waste land, he had to wage a struggle against the Khandawalas. During the time of Narendra Singh, the Khandawalas succeeded in securing a **bazinama** (giving up rights) from the Oinvaras with regard to Bachchaur, Dharaur, Bhala, and Khund Parganas and thereby deprived them of their power in those areas. The struggle between the Khandawalas and the Oinvaras continued till the time of Raja Chattra Singh. After that they were reduced to the status of a minor zamindar and Darbhanga continued with the claim of a principality.

THE OINVARA GENEALOGY

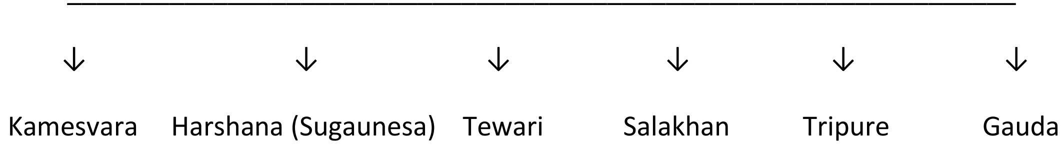
1.

[Vacaspati – Ganapati – 4th of his son who was Jayaditya and 15th in descent from him was Chandranand Jha who shifted to Pilakhwar.]

Atirupa – Visvarupa – Govinda – Laksman

Laksaman





Kamesvara Harshana (Sugaunesa) Tewari Salakhan Tripure Gauda



Sivai

(**MTV** – 224/254)



Kumar Prabhakar



Raja Ratnakara



Kumar Matikar



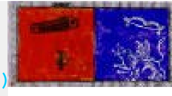
Raja Harisimha



Raja Ramachandra



Raja Pratap Narain





Raja Kirti Narain



Raja Rudra Narain (of the Firman)



Raja Laksmi Narain



Raja Roopnarain (a contemporary of Narendra and Zamindar of Bachchaur)



Raja Fateh Narain



Jagatnarain (son of Fateh)



Kodanda Narain (mentioned in records)

Giridhar Narain, son of Fateh, is not mentioned in **MTV**.



Sridharanarain (son of Giridhar)



Tejadhara Narain (son of Sridhara. His daughter’s son was Sashidhar Narain.)



Kanhainarain (also known as Vaikuntha)



Khojendra Narain



Bodhanarain

2.

Prajapati Jha (Umapati – Vidyapati – Jayapati – Hingu)



Nah Thakur (5th in descent) or Oen Thakur – earned village **Oeni** and changed from Jha to **Thakur** (a feudal title).



Raja Pandita Kameshwara (5th in descent from Nah Thakur)

Kameshwara





Bhogishwara | Kusumeshwara | Bhaveshwara | Laksmikar

Ganeshwara | Ratneshwara | Tripura Simha

(Killed by Arjuna in collaboration with Ratnakar & Arslan)



Arjuna Simha





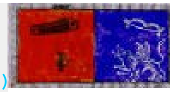
 

Birsimha

Kirti Simha (is said to have got Arjuna killed with the help of Dronwara Puraditya of Raja Banauli and established his Kingdom in Saptari Pargana.)

Line of ruling successors:

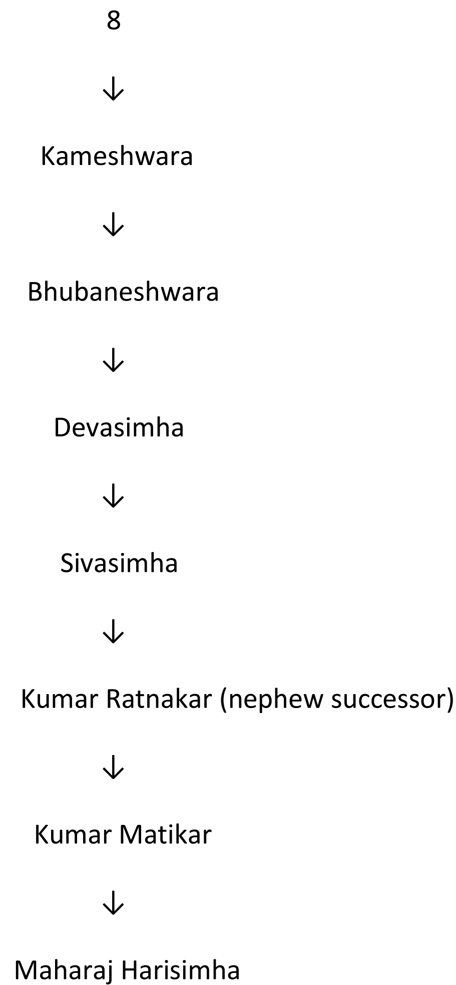
1. Bhavasimha (Tripura Simha, Deva Simha, Udayasimha, Harisimha)
2. Devasimha (Sivasimha, Padmasimha)

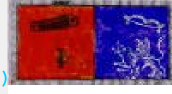


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3. Sivasimha
4. Padmasimha
5. Lakhima (wife of Sivasimha)
6. Padmasimha
7. Viswasadevi (wife of Padmasimha)
8. Harisimha (youngest brother of Devasimha)
9. Narasimha (son of Harisimha)
10. Bhairavasimha (son of Narasimha)
11. Rambhadra (son of Bhairavasimha)
12. Laksminath (son of Rambhadra; died Saka 1449 = 1527 AD.

GENEALOGY AS AVAILABLE FROM CHETADHAR NARAIN SINGH AND PUBLISHED BY HETUKAR JHA




मानुषीमिह संस्कृताम् ISSN 2229-547X VIDEHA



Ramachandra



Pratap Narain



Keertinarain



Rudranarain



Laxminarain



Roopnarain



Fatehnarain



Giridharanarain



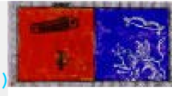
Sridharanarain



Shashidharanarain (grandson from daughter’s side)



Chetadhara Narain



FROM THE PANJI

Raj divided between two brothers

Kameshwara _________________________Harshana



Shibaya



Prabhakar



Raja Ratnakar



Kumar Matikar



Maharaj Harasingh



Ramachandra



Pratapanarain



Keertinarain



Rudranarain



Laxminarain



Kansanarain



Fatehnarain

NOTE: Roopnarain is missing in the Panji record and Kansanarain is not there in Singh's record.

CHRONOLOGICAL SET-UP OF THE OINVARA GENEALOGY AS PRESENTED IN

MITHILA DARPANA BY R B DAS

1. Oen Thakur (1326-1342)
2. Atirupa Thakur (1342-1348)
3. Viswarupa Thakur (1348-1358)
4. Laksmana Thakur (1358-1375)
5. Kameshwara Thakur (1375-1389)
6. Bhavasimha (1389-1397)
7. Devasimha (1397-1403)
8. Sivasmha (1403-1444)
9. Lakhima (1444-1457)
10. Padmasimha (1457-1475)
11. Viswas Devi (1475-1483)
12. Hridayanarain (1483-1505)
13. Harinarain (Bhairava) (1505-1518)
14. Roopnarain (1519-1520)
15. Kamsanarain (1521-1528)

Needless to say that chronological set-up and dating are confusing. (pp. 65-67)

BRANCH OF OINVARA AT ARAIDANGA (MALDA, WEST BENGAL)

Descended from a brother of Kameshwara Thakur ____________ Mansukh Thakur



Larai



Prabhakar



Harpat



Bhavani



Sujan



Syam



Deva



Santosh Kumar*



Kashinath



Chandi



Bireswara



Dinanath

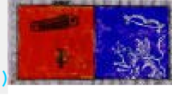


Atul Chandra Kumar



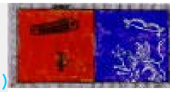
Arun Chandra

*Santosh Kumar migrated from village Oeni to village Aridanga. They first shifted to Murshidabad and then to Aridanga which then formed part of the district of Purnea. They travelled by the Ganga route



and got Lakhraj or Nakhraj gifts as Brahmins from the then Zamindars. There are even today thousands of Maithila brahmanas at Maldah. Maldah district was founded in 1867 out of Purnea district. They still follow Mithila Panji and have relations with Kumars of Putai.

NOTE: Late Atul Chandra Kumar (ex-Parliamentary Secretary, West Bengal Government) was kind enough to procure this genealogy for me.



CHAPTER XIII

CURRENCY UNDER THE OINVARAS OF MITHILA AND ITS BEARINGS ON THE CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

(C. 15th-16th Century AD)

I.

CURRENCY

Hitherto no positive evidence regarding the currency in Mithila is available though we have a recorded history of the land since time immemorial. In view of the flourishing trade, inland and foreign, and brisk business of money-lending, it is natural to presume that some sort of currency must have been in use in this part of the country. The whole set of the Nibandha literature is replete with such references regarding the various types of coins. Hoards of ancient coins have come to light from different parts of Mithila ranging from Purnea to Hajipur and all these are indicative of the fact that coinage was not neglected here. It is true that no coins of the Karnata dynasty (1097-1324/1325) have been found out and the scholars even went to the extent of exclaiming that the Karnatas did not 'care to issue coinage'.[1] The celebrated Tibetan traveller, Dharmasvami, has referred to the use of currency in Tirhut and other parts of Bihar and as such we can conclude that currency was not unknown. According to Dharmasvami, a pana was equal to eighty cowries[2], in ratio in vogue for several centuries. Gold coin was also not unknown. Ramasimhadeva offered gold to this celebrated pilgrim.[3]

Jyotirishvara, in his **Varnaratnakara**, refers to the use of metals like gold, silver, copper and **astadhatu**[4] etc. **Pana**, **Pala**, **Pada** as forms of currency were known to the people of Mithila[5] since the Vedic days and these forms were popular even in later times. We further learn from the **Dhurtasamagamanataka** of Jyotirishvara that money was in frequent use as we find therein that the Snataka shows Anangasena (the pros) a sum of rupees ten tied to a corner of his cloth.[6] Gold, silver, copper coins seem to have been in use. Coins were also known as **Masa**, **Karsapana**, **Pada** and **Ratti**, **Kapardaka**, **Cowrie** etc. Cowrie played an important part in the daily life and economic transactions of Mithila. Cowrie was used by the poorer section of the populace.[7] Candeshvara has shown that at the rate of eight **Panas**, monthly interest on twenty five Puranas, the principal would be doubled in four years and two months.[8] Vardhamana and Vacaspati give us the following details[9]:

i. **Pana** – a copper coin (one-sixteenth of a **Karsapana**). (Cf. **VC** – 5 – 9)
ii. **Masa** – twentieth part of a **pana** (Cf. **VC** – 3, 4) – equal to 16 **Rattikas**.

iii. **Dinara** – a silver coin of 28 units.
iv. **Niska** – a gold coin of 4 units (Cf. **VC** – 107).
v. **Kakini** – one-fourth of a pana.
vi. **Dhanika** – made up of four **Karsapanas**.
vii. **Karsa** – is equal to 16 **Masas**.
viii. **Dharana** – is equal to ten **palas** (Cf. **VC** – 3, 4).
ix. **Tolaka** – 16 **Masas**.
x. **Karsapana** (Cf. **VS** – 108).
xi. **Krsnala** – is equal to half of a silver **Masa**.

These old designations of the coins still persisted and the **Panas** and **Puranas** were not obsolete.

Since all the Nibandhakaras discuss, in details, the pros and cons of money-lending as a business and the various types of interest accruing thereon, it can be said, with some account of certainty, that circulation of money was known during the period. Vidyapati in his **Likhanavali** has given a detailed account of this business and also of the various modes of payment to different types of workers in cash. A succinct account of the types of coinage can be gleaned through this and other works of Vidyapati. Though the exact valuation of the various standard is not clearly known, this much is certain that the use of coin for all purposes had come to stay in Mithila under the Oinvaras. It would be pointed out here that Vidyapati refers to the joint partnership in business and other transactions.[10]

Vidyapati refers to the following types of currency in his **Likhanavali**:

i. **Pana**[11].
ii. **Tanka**[12].
iii. **Mudra** for money[13].
iv. **Svarna**[14].
v. **Rupya**[15].
vi. **Karpada** or **Kapardaka**[16] (**Puranasatamekam Kapardekam**).
vii. **Rupyatanka**[17] – **Rupyatanka** 100, 400 etc., are mentioned.[18]

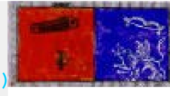
The extensive use of currency, known by various names, seems to have been a regular feature of the daily life of the people. We are told therein that the Kayasthas charged their fees for writing documents in cash money and such fees have also been prescribed by the poet. **Tankah** was also used in market of Jaunpur.[19]

The old currency of mixed metal continued with necessary modifications to suit the local conditions and the contemporary literary sources are replete with such references. **Tankah** or **Rupayatankah** indicated silver coin. Gold coins had become rare. In the present state of our knowledge we cannot preclude the possibility of tri-metallic currency. After the conquest of Tirhut by the Tughlaqs, a mint town was established at Tughlaqpur or Tirhut. The coins of this mint have existed to this day and they are important for the study of currency in Tirhut. These two coins belong to the forced currency of Muhammad Tughlaq (that is brass for silver). They are indicative of his mad attempt to force the people to use brass coins in place of silver for the same value.[20] A large number of the Sharqi, Lodi coins and the

coins of the Sultans of Bengal and Delhi have been discovered from Tirhut. It may be conjectured that these coins came in the wake of their conquest of this part. The rulers of Tirhut did not give up the use of their own currency as would be evident from the Muslim sources.[21] On the authority of **Makhzan-i-Afghana**, Dorn says, "....Sikandar Lodi proceeded to Tirhut whose Raja, submitting, received him solemnly and offered him some lacs of **tankahs**[22] as tribute and present, for the receipt of which the Sultan left Mubarak Khan behind."[23] Badauni's account is misleading as he says that the Sultan proceeded to Tirhut and conquered it.[24] All these have been discussed here just to show that **Tankah** was used in Tirhut. Even Babur's Memoirs contain references to the use of silver **tankahs** in Tirhut.[25]

That the Oinvaras of Mithila had their own coins is evident from the four coins, discovered from Tirhut so far, two of gold and two of silver. A piece of copper coin, belonging to a Hindu ruler, was also noticed in Tirhut. Sivasimha issued gold coins of which only two specimens have come to light. It appears that Thakur, being led away by the findings of the late R D Banerji, doubted the genuineness of these coins.[26] These coins bear close resemblance to the quarter drammas of the Cedis and other rulers.[27] These gold coins bear the leend, running from obverse to reverse, **Shri-Shivasya**, and they have been rightly ascribed to Sivasimha, the greatest king of the dynasty.[28] It is very strange that the authors of the **BTA** (444) does not say anything about the issue of these coins by Sivasimha and simply passes on by mentioning this king as a patron of Vidyapati and nothing more. As opposed to this partiality, Dr R C Mazumdar has rightly emphasised the importance of the reign of Sivasimha in the following words, "....In some cases, the kings of Tirhut issued coins. ....An important evidence of Sivasimha's general success and freedom from the Muslim yoke is furnished by the gold coins issued by him."[29] These coins were discovered from Pipra in the district of Champaran. A similar coin was previously published by Cunningham.[30] R D Banerji assigned this coin, bearing the name of Champaran to the dynasty of Sivasimha.[31]

Two silver coins of the time of Bhairavasimhadeva of this dynasty have also come to light. Out of these two, one was published by me for the first time and subsequently by Dr D C Sircar and the other was brought to the notice of Dr Sircar by his numismatist, Mr A N Lahiri. These coins have been subjected to rigorous criticism by a number of scholars including the late Dr Altekar and Dr P L Gupta. The coin, in question, came to my hand through Professor Askari and is said to have been discovered at Bairmo in the district of Darbhanga. Other coins of this find have been edited in the **JNSI** and Indian Numismatic Chronicle by my friend Dr Qeyamuddin Ahmad. The other coins belonged to the Sultans of Bengal. The script[32] of the legend on the coin is Maithili of the fifteenth century AD and not Gaudiya as Dr D C Sircar would have us believe.[33] The amended reading of the legend, as suggested by Dr Sircar, is as follows: **Maharaja Shri Darppanarayanatmaja Tirabhuktiraja Shri Bhairavasimhasya, Shaka – 1411, Rajya, 15**. The coin was issued by Bhairavasimha in the fifteenth regnal year which fell on Shaka **1411 (1489-90 AD)**. Fortunately for us both these kings, Sivasimha and Bhairavasimha, have been mentioned by Vidyapati and this goes to show that Vidyapati was **definitely alive between Saka 1324 and 1411 (1402-1490 AD)**. Both of them have been described by Vidyapati as **Pancagaudesvara**. The Bairmo find is a little bigger in size than the Indian Museum find.[34] The two coins seem to have been struck from two different dies. The Oinvara tradition of coinage, begun by Sivasimha, seems to have been followed by Bhairava. Whether the coin was minted or cast, it is difficult to say on the basis of these four coins. The



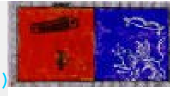
rim of the silver coin enables us to suggest that the coins were generally die-cast. The coins of Sivasimha are round in shape with varying diameters and the legend runs from obverse to the reverse. The silver coins of Bhairavasimha are round in shape with a diameter of one inch or less and on both obverse and reverse there is a square made of raised lines within a circular line of the same type. The legend, here too, runs from obverse to the reverse, a feature accepted by the Oinvara rulers. While these peculiarities have been studied from the numismatic point of view, it may be noted here that these coins help us in reconstructing the political history of the period and in setting aright the vexed problem of the chronology of the Oinvaras at some length.

II

LIGHT ON POLITICAL HISTORY

Though in recent years attempts have been made to clear the mist surrounding the political history of Mithila[35] under the Oinvaras, much still remains to be done in so far as the political and chronological are concerned. The two dated coins are very important in so far as these two aspects are concerned. These two bear the regnal year and the dates in Saka era, which are authentic. Even after the publication of Professor Askari's articles, the tangled web of the history of the Oinvaras remains as it was.[36] After the decline of the Karnatas, the most important event in the history of Mithila[37] was the invasion of Haji Ilyas[38], the traditional founder of Hajipur. He divided the kingdom of Tirhut into two parts with Burhi Gandaka as the boundary mark, the northern part being under the control of the Oinvaras and the southern under the Sultan of Bengal. Firuz Tughlaq is said to have re-united Tirhut and placed it in the hands of Bhogisvara[39], son of Kamesvara and is said to have appointed Qazi for administrative purposes (Cf. K K Basu, '**The House of Tughlaq**'; **JASB** (NS), XXVI, 253).

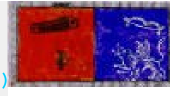
Sivasimha was undoubtedly one of the greatest kings of eastern India. He occupies a very prominent place in the annals, and is well known for his catholicity of spirit, liberality and for his patronage of art and letters, in an age otherwise marred by hatred, mutual jealousies and suspicion, family bickering and internecine quarrels. To him goes the credit of emancipating the land of Mithila from the rigours of Muslim control. At a time when the powers of Delhi, Jaunpur and Bengal were fighting among themselves for supremacy, Sivasimha made Mithila independent and signalised the event by the issue of his gold coins. In the present state of our knowledge, it is not possible to say definitely whether he 'broke away'[40] from the Delhi yoke or from some other Muslim power. Only the discovery of a complete **MSS** of the **Kirtipataka** would help us in solving the tangled web. This work was written after the mysterious disappearance of Sivasimha for celebrating his greatness in **Kavya**. Sivasimha possibly became independent in Saka 1324 (=1402/3 AD) and ruled[41] for about three years and nine months. In the **Kirtipataka**, Vidyapati describes the glory that was Tirhut under Sivasimha.[42] Here he has given a long list of persons connected with the Oinvara court viz., Arjuna Rai, Jagatasimha, Commander Suraja, Rajanandana, Haradatta, Bhikkhu, Pudamalla, Gopal Mallick, Jayasimha, Harihara, Rajadeva, Kedaradasa, Sohana, Prince Murari, Ramasimha, Prthvisimha, Vidu (a clown), Damodara, courtier Janaranjana, treasurer Sone, Vidyadhara, Kamalakara, Ranadhiradeva, Sultan of Gauda, Srirama, Sakho, Sanehi Jha and others.[43] Some of these names are common to **Kirtilata**. These names deserve a separate study and hence need not detain us here. At one place Sivasimha is shown fighting and wounding the Muslim



soldiers.[44] His bravery forced the Sultan to enthuse his soldiers[45] and ultimately to take up arms himself.[46] Sivasimha also inspires his soldiers.[47] The people of Mithila left no stone unturned to fight back the enemy but victory ultimately smiled on the Sultan.[48] We learn from the **Bayaz** of Mulla Taqia that in AH 805 (=1402 AD) Ibrahim Sharqi marched towards Bengal in response to an appeal of the saints oppressed by Raja Kamsha or Ganesha who is said to have been in league with Sivasimha, whose headquarter was then at Lehra.[49]

Even after the light of freedom was lit by Sivasimha, the threat of absorption was always there. The traditional autonomous status seems to have continued till the advent of Bhairavasimhadeva who seems to have again asserted his independence, as is evident from his two silver coins. Dr D C Sircar observes, "....They aspired for independent status.[50] ....On occasions a few of them got an opportunity to assume independence temporarily as a result of quarrels among the said Muslim powers or of their weakness or pre-occupation. ....That Bhairavasimha ruled for sometimes as independent ruler of Tirhut is indicated by his issue of silver coins."[51] Bhairavasimha ruled from Bachaur in the district of Darbhanga and is said to have been a very powerful king. There are differences of opinion with regard to his date, an usual feature with the history of the Oinvaras.[52] Vacaspati was a court Pandita of Bhairava. The **Mahadananirnaya** of Vacaspati seems to have been dedicated to Bhairavendra and Rupanarayana at the beginning and at the end respectively.[53] It has been suggested that the work was started during the reign of the father and completed during that of his son.[54] We are fortunate in the sense that we have got a copy of **Sudhinirnaya** of Vacaspati dated in the Saka era 1416 (=1594 AD). Like Sivasimha, Bhairavasimha was also very powerful king and according to Vidyapati, he is too credited with having defeated the **Pancagaudesvara**. He was a great patron of art and letters; and viewed from the history of Sanakrit literature and philosophical dissertations, his reign is one of the most remarkable periods of literary pursuits. He was a benevolent ruler and adept in the art of politics. An unnoticed work of Vacaspati, **Nyayaratnaprakasha**[55], (a commentary on pre-Gangesha work) has been brought to light by D C Bhattacharya and that throws some welcome light on the reign of Bhairavasimha. It appears that Vacaspati had to leave his native land and he came back probably when Bhairava became the undisputed king of Mithila.

The prowess of Bhairavendra is evidenced by Vardhamana who supplies us with the information that this ruler of Mithila subjugated the lord of the Pancagauda. He treated Kedara Rai, a representative of Gauda, as of his wife and subordinate. In my earlier Paper, I had pointed out that the whole episode was problematic, and the same view was expressed by later writers on the subject.[56] According to Mulla Taqia, Ruknuddin Barbak Shah of Bengal appointed Kedara Rai to collect tributes from Tirhut. Barbak ruled between 1459 and 1474 AD, the date of accession of Bhairavasimha as proved by his two silver coins. The Sultanates of Delhi, Jaunpur and Bengal were passing through evil days, being convulsed by internal dissensions and foreign wars. It is not unlikely, therefore, that Bhairavendra, on his accession to the throne, took advantage of the opportunity and defeated Kedara Rai and assumed his independence once again by issuing coins on the very first year. On the authority of the Mulla, we know that Kedara Rai was the representative of Barbak Shah, but other portions of Mulla's evidence do not stand substantiated in face of the coins of Bhairavendra.[57] Askari had no idea about the reference to Kedara Rai in Sanskrit, while Thakur, Mazumdar and Sircar had no idea about the **Bayaz** of the Mulla. Had



Mithila not been independent, why the Muslim rulers invaded again and again for supremacy till ultimately she was conquered by Nasrat Shah?

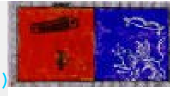
Bhairavendra was succeeded by Ramabhadra (Saka 1490/91 = 1504 AD). In the **Dvaitanirnaya** of Bibhakara, Ramabhadra has been described as a friend of Sikandar Lodi. If that is so, Ramabhadra must have been ruling in Mithila, when Sikandar Lodi is said to have come to this side and secured tributes from him. By paying tribute and purchasing peace and friendship of Sikandar Lodi, Ramabhadra saved the independence of Mithila, though her existence was precariously sandwiched between Delhi and Bengal. It may be noted here that when he was ruling in Mithila, there was a separate dynasty ruling at Champaran in the VS 1556 (=1500 AD). To what relation did this ruler stand to Ramabhadra, it is very difficult to say in the present state of our knowledge. Ramabhadra was succeeded by Laksminatha Kamsanarayana and he was definitely ruling in 1513 AD.[58] He has been described in the Bhagirathpur inscription as a great warrior and a terror in Tirhut to the king of the Yavana. The independent status of Mithila seems to have continued right up to his reign and this is supported by the fact that Nasrat Shah sent a military expedition against Tirhut which subjugated the province for good. He is said to have put to death the Raja of Tirhut. As undated inscription of Nasrat Shah from Matihani (Begusarai) is a proof of the fact that he conquered north Bihar. With him ended the glorious rule of the Oinvaras and Dr R C Mazumdar has rightly observed, "The survival of the small state of Tirhut, a tiny Hindu island in the Muslim ocean must be regarded as an event of the highest importance. ....The contribution of the small state of Tirhut to the preservation and development of the Hindu culture exceeds far in importance, and given a special value to its political history."[59]

III

CHRONOLOGY AND DATE

Since the silver coins of Bhairavasimha, under discussion here, give us the regnal year 15 in the Saka era 1411, we propose to take into consideration the chronology of the later Oinvaras on the basis of the Saka era only. In doing so, I have been guided by the fact that the initial date of the L. San. Era has not yet been finally settled though some scholars have made sweeping generalisations in this regard.[60] The era has got be viewed more scientifically now in view of the evidences, more definite and specific, supplied by numismatics. It must be admitted here that only few dates of the Oinvara history are recorded in the Saka era and it is on the basis of these dates that I propose to reconstruct the chronology. Some of the well known dates in the Saka era are:

i. Saka 1324 in case of Sivasimha.
ii. Saka 1375 in the Kandaha inscription of Narasimhadeva. Jayaswal, with a view to fit in Narasimha in the chronogram supplied by the L. San. Era, wrongly interpreted this inscription to suit his own point of view, and suggested that it should be Saka 1357 (**JBORS** – XX, 16-19). We do not understand as to why there should be deviation from the accepted theory of **ankaksya vamagati**.
iii. The **MSS** of the **Sudhinirnaya** of Vacaspati is dated in the Saka 1416.
iv. The **MSS** of Dandakanda of the **Krtyakalpataru** was copied in Mithila in the Saka 1426.



v. A verse ascribing the death of Laksminatha Kamsanarayana is dated in Saka 1449.

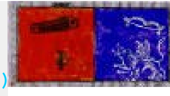
vi. In the spurious Bisaphi grant[61], L S 293 has been shown as equivalent to Saka 1329 (?), whereas in the **Kirtilata**, the same L S is equivalent to 1324 Saka.

vii. The two silver coins of Bhairavasimha dated in the **Saka era 1411**.

The two dates on the inscriptions and the coins are based on solid foundations and as such we can subject them to further scrutiny. With regard to Saka 1324, it may be assumed that Sivasimha was a full-fledged ruler and has attained independent status after which he is said to have granted Bisaphi to Vidyapati. Since there is not much ground for doubt with regard to this era, we may fairly suggest that this date may be taken as the starting point of the Oinvara chronology. Another important date in the Saka era is 1375 = 1453 AD, when Narasimha was ruling. If calculated from the established datum of the L S chronogram, to which Jayaswal was a victim, the whole chronological set up would have to be revised. Saka era is the most undisputable era and if coins and inscriptions of Mithila are dated in this era, we should try to start our enquiry on these lines so that the mist surrounding the chronology of Mithila, might be cleared. Possibly this was the motive of Narasimhadeva or Bhairavasimha in using the Saka era in preference to the L S era, which has been exclaimed by some as the national era of Mithila. In view of these three royal references to the Saka era, I venture to suggest that the Oinvara rulers used Saka as th official era and the L S was the alternate era prevalent in Mithila. Even today there are a number of eras prevalent in this area. It now seems to me that in recasting the Oinvara chronology, weight should be given to the recorded Saka era, especially on coins and inscriptions. The Kandaha inscriptions is definite on the point that Narasimha was ruling in Mithila in 1453 AD. So far as Bhairava is concerned, there is nothing to worry as we learn definitely from his coins that he issued them in the fifteenth year of his reign. Since Saka 1411 is equal to 1489-90 AD, it may be presumed that he ascended the throne in 1474 AD. The question of either putting back or taking forward the date of accession of Bhairavasimha does not arise in face of the numismatic evidence that we have. The Saka era 1416 (=1494/95 AD) on the **Sudhinirnaya MSS** of Vacaspati is an evidence of the fact that Bhairava ruled between 1474 and 1495 AD and was succeeded by Ramabhadra, whose Saka era 1426 (=1504-5 AD) is known to us from a MSS, referred to above. Ramabhadra's relation with Sikandar Lodi has been referred to earlier. Thus he can be placed between 1495 and 1510 AD. Since Vidyapati was alive till at the beginning of the reign of Bhairava, it can be now safely surmised that he frequented the Oinvara court between Saka 1324 (=1402-3 AD) and Saka 1396 (=1474 AD). Thakur, at one place, says that Bhairava ruled up to 1515 AD (**TM**, 334), and at other, describes Laksminatha as a ruler of Mithila in 1513 AD. Such chronological errors are numerous in his book and he does not seem to have checked the references while passing over to another reign. Saka 1449 (=1527-8 AD) marks the death of the last Oinvara king, Laksminatha (**BMI**, 554), who is otherwise known to us from the Bhagirathpur inscription (**PIHC**, 1955). The literary source, referred to says that he was **Nihatya**. It appears that Laksminatha was either killed or dead in 1527-8 AD. Until further evidence is forthcoming, the above datum of the Oinvara chronology should be taken as the standard lamp posts in the dark nights of the Oinvara history and chronology.

i. 1402-3 AD – Sivasimha as the independent ruler of Tirhut.

ii. 1453 AD – Narasimhadeva was ruling in Mithila.



iii. 1460-1474 AD – Dhirasimha was ruling in Mithila.
iv. 1474-1495 AD – Bhairava was ruling.
v. 1495-1510 AD – Ramabhadra was ruling.
vi. 1510-1528 AD – Laksminatha, the last ruler of the Oinvara dynasty was ruling. (Thakur did not make any improvement over his predecessors in so far as the chronology of the Oinvaras is concerned.)

APPENDIX

THE BHAGIRATHPUR INSCRIPTION OF KANSANARAYANA DATED L S 403 (OR 394?)

The Bhagirathpur Inscription turns over a new leaf in the hitherto obscure history of Mithila in the middle ages. It helps us in ascertaining some important problems of chronology and dynastic history of Mithila under the Oinvaras, who succeeded the Karnatas in 1324-5 (sic). We have a solitary epigraphic evidence of the Oinvara dynasty.[1] Its chronology is still in a state of flux and we have to depend mostly on literary and traditional sources.[2] From the cultural point of view, the history of Mithila under the Oinvaras (c. 1324-1529) is very important as it was under the patronage of this dynasty that poets and scholars of repute like Candesvara, Vidyapati, Vacaspati, Rucipati, Vardhamana, Samkara, Paksadhara, etc., flourished. Various treatises on **Nyaya** and **Dharmasastra** were written and compiled.

The present inscription was discovered in a village, Bhagirathpur, in the district of Darbhanga. Dr Brajkishore Verma of Bahera was kind enough to send a copy of the epigraph and in the meantime the whole text came out in the local newspaper. This is the second inscription of the Oinvara dynasty. Kansanarayana of this inscription was the last king of the dynasty, and was contemporary of the Hussain Shahi kings (Alauddin Hussain Shah and Nasrat Shah) of Bengal. The present record gives a definite date of Kansanarayana and as such affords a reliable date for a study of then history.

It is inscribed on a stone door-frame and refers to the construction of a Matha or temple, made under the instructions of Anumati Devi, daughter-in-law of Harinarayana, wife of Ramabhadra (Rupnarayana) and mother of Kansanarayana. In all there are seven lines. It is in Maithili script. At places some letters are blurred. Madhava is the composure of this prasasti. The genealogy, given therein, is as follows:

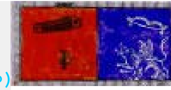
Harinarayana (Bhairavendra or Bhairavasimha)



Daughter-in-law Anumati Devi (wife of Raja Ramabhadra or Rupnarayana)



Kansanarayana (son)

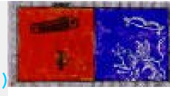


There is no room for any doubt that this Kansanarayana was the last king of this dynasty. It is known to us from various sources that Bhairavasimha had the 'viruda' "Harinarayana". He was a powerful king and has been called 'Mithilaprthviswarena' by Vardhamana.[3] Himself a man of charitable disposition, he made princely donations and gifts to various persons.[4] He was succeeded by his son Ramabhadra who had the 'viruda' "Rupnarayana", which is also corroborated by the present record. His fame attracted persons from outside. He is said to have ruled up to 1496, if not more. Kansanarayana was his son and successor and was also known by the name of Laksminathadeva.

Since the name 'Kansanarayana' is very common and is occasionally used by the earlier Oinvara rulers, it is likely that the present record may give rise to suspicion in certain quarters who always try to push back the recorded dates. In this case the point is crystal clear. A song of Vidyapati is ascribed to one 'Kansadalanarayana'.[5] Here we have to remember that this was the 'viruda' of Dhirasimha, who is also known as "Ripuraja Kansadalana Pratyaksa Narayana".[6] He was also known as Hrdayanarayana.[7] Dhirasimha was the son of Narasimhadeva while Kansanarayana of the present inscription was the grandson of Harinarayana and son of Ramabhadra Rupnarayana. Naturally the point of pushing back the date on this assumption or on other grounds does not stand.

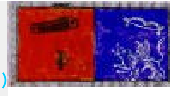
We have a reference to Kansanarayana in a song in Locan's Ragatarangini[8], which makes him a contemporary of Nasrat Shah of Bengal (1519-1532). Kansanarayana was the greatest patron of Maithili songs after Sivasimha and was himself a poet of repute.[9] In the song referred to above, he mentions Nasrat Shah. According to the present inscription, Kansanarayana's name was a terror to the Muslim kings. Mithila, in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, though enjoying internal autonomy, was subject to payment of regular tribute to Delhi or Bengal as the case might be and was sandwiched between the two rival Muslim powers of Delhi and Bengal. We have various references in the Muslim sources that Mithila was attached by them from different sectors. Hussain Shah Sharqi, just after strengthening himself, had crushed the now virtually independent landholders of Tirhut and had devastated and plundered that province. There is no doubt that he held some sway over Tirhut as we find him deporting Tatar Khan Lodi to Saran in Tirhut.[10] When the Lodi-Sharqi contest for supremacy resulted in the former's occupation of Jaunpur, Hussain remained in the eastern portion of his kingdom (AH 888-900), Having chosen Biharsharif as his capital and ruling over Bihar and Tirhut with a revenue yield of five crores of Dam.[11] After the absorption of Jaunpur kingdom, the Lodi empire extended up to the confines of Bihar. The kind treatment meted out to Hussain Sharqi by Alauddin Hussain Shah of Bengal excited Sikandar Lodi's suspicion. He moved up to Tughalaqpur (Tirhut?) on Bengal's frontiers in 1495. Soon a treaty was signed between the two. Sikandar conferred the districts around Tughlaqpur on Azam Humayun, while Bihar became the **iqta** of Darya Khan Lohani.[12] Sikandar Lodi is said to have defeated the king of Mithila and exacted heavy tribute.[13] We further learn that Ramabhadra Rupnarayana of Mithila was a contemporary of Sikandar and had some personal relations with him.[14]

It appears that just after the withdrawal of Sikandar Lodi, Hussain Shah of Bengal again invaded Tirhut and extended his sway up to Saran.[15] The kingdom of Mithila had fallen into pieces and we find that the Champaran king was subdued by Mian Hussain Farmuli.[16] Probably it was after the re-conquest of Tirhut that Hussain Shah of Bengal proceeded against the kingdom of Assam. The Muslim historians have mentioned a number of rulers as having been overcome[17] and one such ruler is Rupnarayana.[18] Both the



editors of Cambridge History of India (Volume III) and History of Bengal (Volume II) are silent on the identification of most of these names. Rupnarayana of this list was no other than Ramabhadra Rupnarayana of Mithila and certainly a feudatory of Bengal ruler and not otherwise as held by Sir Jadunath.[19] The vassal status of Rupnarayana is thus evident and it may be conjectured that Kansanarayana, after his accession, certainly without success attempted to regain his independent status. This attempt at regaining independence might have emboldened the court poet to attribute such hyperbolic expressions to the reigning monarch. There is nothing unusual in this as the court poets have been doing so since time immemorial. Kansanarayana's assertion of independence might have been the cause of Nasrat's invasion of Mithila. Nasrat conquered and annexed it to his own kingdom. We are told that the Tirhut king was put to death.[20] The event must have taken place before 1527 as the Sikandarpur inscription of his commandant is dated in that year. On all counts it is clear that Nasrat defeated Kansanarayana and established his sway in that territory.

The composer of the **prasasti**, Madhava, is also one of the leading poets of Mithila. We have a reference about this poet in a Maithil anthology, '**Rasikajivana**' of Gadadhar Bhatta of Mithila.[21] Himself a Maithil, he has quoted profusely the verse of Maithil poets. In Gode's list, Madhava's poetry is quoted in Folio 12. Madhava might have been a court poet of Kansanarayana. Thus the present inscription adds a new name to the already existing list of a galaxy of Maithil writers. Hence viewed from literary standpoint, it is an important discovery.

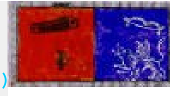


CHAPTER XIV

THE KHANDAVALAS OF MITHILA

Like the Karnatas and the Oinvaras[1] of Mithila, the origin of the Khandavalas is shrouded in mystery and no scientific account of this dynasty is yet available though a good deal of traditional account has been written or compiled by the scholars.[2] After the fall of the Oinvaras, Mithila was passing through a period of political chaos and confusion and there was no stability. During this period of confusion, some Rajput chiefs usurped power here and there and established their sway. The **Aini Tirhut** preserves an account of the ruling dynasty. The contemporary chronicler, Mulla Taqia, does not say anything about the Khandavalas except a passing reference on traditional lines to Mahamahopadhyaya Mahesa Thakura. It is apparent that the Khandavalas did not immediately succeed the Oinvaras as we see that even before the accession of Akbar, Tappas Saronja and Parri belonged to a Hindu Raja Chunchun after whose death, Laksmi Simha, a Rajput came to that part of the country in 954 AH (=1547-48 AD) and obtained a sanad from the then emperor.[3] Even the famous couplet **Az Kose ta Johse** (Dhose?) (from the Kosi to the whole of Tirhut), and **Az Gang ta Sang** (from Ganges to the mountain), ascribed to **Mm** Mahesa Thakura and mentioned in the Purnea Settlement Report, originated after the conquest of Tirhut by Illtutmish. It seems that after the long lapse of time when **Mm** Mahesa Thakura acquired the territory of Mithila, the old adage was attributed to him and since then the concept has been very popular.[4] A scientific history of the dynasty can be prepared only when the archives of the Raj family are thrown open to thehistorians.[5] Stray references are available to us here and there and various lists, **prasastis** and other accounts published by the Raj Press throw some scattered light on the history of the family.[6] Vincent Smith[7] informs us that in the Mackenzie collection of the India Office Library there is a '**Sanskrit history of a part of Akbar's reign**, written in prose and verse, by Mahesa Thakura.' It has to be borne in mind here that the old territorial divisions of Mithila (Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saharsa, Purnea and the parts of Munger and Bhagalpur) were now gone and in these areas there were now separate administrative units. Since the days of Haji Illyas, Champaran and Tirhut came to be separately mentioned and during the Mughal period, Purnea was made a separate Sarkar. Bettia, Narhan, Banaili were separate estates besides small Zemindaries spread all over north Bihar.[8] Long after the assumption of power by Akbar, the Karranis and Afghans held sway over a major portion of Tirhut and the Mughal rulers had to face a sea of troubles in the beginning. Under the Mughals, Tirhut or North Bihar (as popularly known) consisted of the following divisions[9]:

i. Sarkar Champaran – 3 Mahals.
ii. Sarkar Hajipur – 11 Mahals.
iii. Sarkar Tirhut – 74 Mahals.



iv. Sarkar Purnea – 9 Mahals.

Darbhanga was a Mahal of Sarkar Tirhut. The Khandavalas seem to have enjoyed the status of powerful Zemindar under the Mughals. The Mughal officials were posted at Darbhanga. The status, enjoyed by the Karnatas and the Oinvaras, was not the privilege of the Khandavalas.[10]

Very little is known about the origin of the Khandavalas and the history of Darbhanga Raj. Recent researches have brought to light some important documents of the Raj family[11], but they are also silent about the origin of the Khandavalas. The original farman in the name of Mahesa Thakura is not yet available though it is said that its contents are noted in document of 1655-56[12]. The earliest farman is that of Akbar granted to Gopal Thakura, who was entrusted with the Qanungoship and Choudherysgip of the entire Sarkar Tirhut. He was authorised to realise at the rate of ¼ **tanka** per bigha (as **rasum** of Qanungoship) and 1 tanka per bigha (as **rasum** for Choudharyship) for the management of affairs and for his private subsistence. He is to be considered 'absolute'.[13] In my earlier study[14], I had suggested that in offering this Zemindari to Mahesa Thakura (or his descendants?) Akbar had some motives. The Afghans were disturbing the whole area of North Bihar (from Purnea to Hajipur) and hence it was necessary to have a man of the soil for the collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order. Even the local rulers, here and there, were restive, and therefore, the area, originally granted to Raghunandana as the tradition goes, was confirmed in favour of the Khandavalas, who had acquired name at Mandla and later at Delhi. According to the grant, referred to above, the Khandavala ruler (Mahesa Thakura or Gopal Thakura) was a state functionary charged with responsibility of maintaining law and order and the collection of revenue. From a perusal of records, it appears that no land grant was possibly attached.

A newly discovered **MSS**[15] entitled **Gadhesa-Nrpa-Varnan-Samgraha-Slokah**, contains some information about the Maithila scholars including Mahesa Thakura. This **MSS** may be considered as a supplement to the **MSS**, entitled **Gadhesa-Nrpa-Varnanam**[16] of Rupanatha, a Maithila, and compiled in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The first **MSS** contains verses in praise of the rulers of Gadha Mandala dynasty. The **MSS** contains the collection of thirteen poets of which one is Thakkura. Thakkura is identified with Mahesa Thakura.（The following verses are ascribed to Mahesa Thakura:

चूड़ामणिर्जन्मदमेघकृत्ये, स्वाचार्यआसीद भूथेथतस्मै ।।

तत्सांगतायः पवियिनृपोदात्, काशीमगाद्यो नृपवन्नृपांते ।।

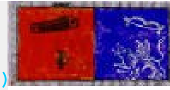
साधूनार्माभिलाषसिद्धिविभवः क्षात्रंसमग्रंमहः ।।

शक्तिर्मूक्तिमतीस्मरस्यभवनः कीर्तिः कुलस्योन्नतिः ।।

सवर्स्वेसुकृतस्य कौशलमितिस्रष्टुर्गुणानां निधि ।।

दोषानामपर्थसुतोSस्यनृपतेः श्री प्रेमनारायणः ।।)

Rupanatha, the compiler of another work, regards Thakkura (Mahesa Thakura) as a religious preceptor of Yado Rai. He was a contemporary of Dalpati Shah and Rani Durgawati, and both of them listened to the religious discourse of Mahesa Thakura with rapt attention jointly and sometimes separately. Mahesa



Thakura, a great scholar and versatile genius, used to recite the **Puranas**. It appears from the contemporary local records that one Mahesa Thakura, due to certain unavoidable reasons , failed to attend to his duties personally and sent his trusted disciple, Raghunandana, as his substitute. Inspite of his efficiency, the offensive remarks of Durgawati compelled him to leave the State and he went to Bastar, where he secured a liberal grant. He presented one of such grants to Durgawati and proceeded on to Delhi alongwith Mahesa Thakura. At Delhi, he obtained from Akbar a free gift of the territory of Tirhut (Darbhanga) and got it registered in the name of his Guru, Mahesa Thakura. When Mahesa Thakura and Raghunandana proceeded to Darbhanga, Mahesa's younger brother, Damodar Thakura, continued to be the royal preceptor of the Gonda rulers but when he refused to officiate at the installation ceremony of Madhukarashah (since Madhukara was noted for cruelty), Damodar was deprived of **jagir** and went back to Darbhanga.

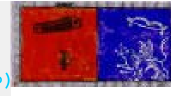
The known immediate predecessors of Mahesa Thakura are Jnanapati Thakura, Purushottama Thakura, Padmanabha Thakura and the known descendants of Damodara are chronologically Kamaladatta Thakura, Ruchipati Thakura, Indrapati Thakura and Premanidhi Thakura.[17] The villages of Mahespura and Tirhutiya tola are reminiscent of the dominance of the Maithilas in the vicinity of Mandala even today. The tradition about Raghunandana is yet preserved.[18] Few verses of Ghansyama Misra, said to be a relation of the descendants of Premanidhi Thakura, is also preserved in the collection referred to above. The local tradition in Mithila confirms this view.[19] His predecessors had proceeded to Khandva earlier and has secured grants for their literary merits and other activities and that is why they called themselves Khandavalas. Mahesa Thakura is said to have composed verses in praise of Mana Simha (who was instrumental in getting the grant transferred in the name of Mahesa Thakura) and Akbar.[20] It is generally believed that Mahesa Thakura received the grant in the 1556 AD.[21] As stated earlier, Mahesa Thakura had to face a lot of troubles in settling down in Mithila, which was then divided into a number of smaller units.[22] Bhaura was an important administrative centre and Kesava Kayastha was the 'Adhipati' of that area. A **MSS**, in my possession, containing the list of the rulers of Tirhut calls Kesava a **Diwan** (Prime Minister) and a **Majamalamadar** combined. During the period (1526-1556), the Bhar Rajputs were also ruling in different parts of Tirhut. Babar mentions one Rupanarayana of Tirhut.[23] Rupanarayana was a tributary of Bihar. When Mahesa Thakura came, he had to face a stiff opposition.[24] He succeeded in stabilising his position in Mithila and laid the foundation of a strong administration after suppressing the local chiefs and chieftains.

Tirhut was, then, the important centre of the Karrannis and the Afghans. In their fight with the Kakkars, the Karrannis succeeded and defeated them in the Gandaka region and wrested some territory.[25] Taj Khan Karrani attained supreme status and the discontented Afghan chiefs rallied round him. Sulaiman was the unquestioned leader of the Karrannis (1565-72).[26] He was succeeded by Daud and during his reign, the Mughals extended their authority in Bihar with success. Rebellions and revolts were regular feature in North Bihar and the problem of state administration in that area was the first pre-requisite of any state government. It was Hussain Quli Khan who was entrusted by Akbar to tackle the problem. The Bihar army was reorganised under Khan Jahan. Raja Gopala[27] was one of the assistants of Khan Jahan and I am inclined to believe that Gopala was the Khandavala ruler of Tirhut. It was possibly in recognition of his services to the Mughal army, in suppressing the revolt and in bringing about

stabilisation in the area of Tirhut, that Akbar made a fresh grant. Gopala got the fresh grant with certain specification of his rights and duties and that is an indication of his loyalty to Akbar. After his conquest of Bihar, Akbar made it a Suba[28] (or Province). Tirhut was an important Sarkar (one of the biggest Sarkars) with seventy two Mahals under it and officers like Fauzdars, Amils, and Jagirdars were appointed. Darbhanga, during the Mughal period, was a Mahal under Sarkar Tirhut.[29] The decentralising forces were still at work in North Bihar and the Emperor was compelled to send Mulla Tayab, Rai Purushottam[30] and Shamshir Khan to be respectively Diwan and Bakshi and in-charge of the Khalsa revenue of the Province of Bihar.

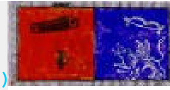
A very interesting detail about the history of the Khandavalas is available to us from the Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records (P C R C, p.81 – No. 104, May 1788-June 1789). A letter dated Nov. 9, 1789 from Tirhut to Sir John Shore, President and a member of the Board of Revenue, mentions about the refutation of the claim of the Dustorrant collection of which he was collecting of late years. But history shows that he had no hereditary claim over such collection. By dint of his ability and aptitude, he (Mahesa Thakura) attracted the notice of emperor Akbar. ....The privilege of collecting Suddooee was confirmed during the Subadari of Nawab Mahabat Jang in 1135 Fasli. Rago Sing (Raghava Simha) by his large presents to the Nawab, Mahabat Jang, and his amla, acquired the mokarari lease of Tirhut at one lac rupee and a full confirmation of his title of Raja. He also paid annually a **nazrana** of Rupees 50,000/- to Diwan Dharnidhara, by which he secured the quiet possession of Sircar. Eknaut Thakura (Eknath), father of Madhava Simha, having fallen out with his principal Raghava Simha, went to Mahabat Jang and gave him information of all the Raja's profit. It aroused the cupidity of the Nawab, who, at once, marched towards Tirhut and seized all the property belonging to Raghava Simha amounting to ten or twelve lacs. Though the Raja fled, but his family was captured and brought to Patna. Ultimately there was compromise and the Raja was ordered to collect the revenue of Tirhut for the Nawab, receiving himself only to sundry Nankar villages and Suddooee. Raghava Simha evinced keen interest and the country prospered. After his death, his family succeeded. Madhava Simha multiplied distress and desolated the country.

Mahesa Thakura was succeeded by Gopala (his second son, first son having already predeceased his father). He is credited with having subdued the rebellious Rajput chiefs. It was possibly during his reign that the revenue settlement of Todarmal was introduced. The document, now made available, of the reign of Gopala Thakura is an authenticated copy, suggests that Gopala Thakura was to look after the interests of the Diwani and he was authorised to realise the aforesaid sum for his own maintenance. He was the official Choudhari and Qanungo and the Ryots were directed to regard him as such. My contention is that in recognition of Gopala's services to the Mughal army, Akbar re-affirmed the grant. Khan-Jahan, under whom he had fought, is one of the persons who endorsed the document. Another important point, brought in this grant, is that a representation had to be made to the emperor. The local opposition was, no doubt, there but Singh and Ahmed (op.cit.) have confused the issue. Tirhut was then the centre of all sorts of rebels and aspirants and Mughal authority was not firmly established. The possibility is that in view of the then disturbed condition, the local authorities refused to acknowledge the authority (as assumed) of the Khandavalas and that is why Akbar explicitly stated in the Firman that 'they should not consider anyone as sharing these powers with him'. This might also indicate that some



of his own kinsmen might have been aspirants for the same. Gopala Thakura had been making all efforts to support the empire and his services were recognised with royal confirmation. Mulla Taqia preserves a list of the officials of the Mughal empire in Tirhut. When Bahadur Badakshi of Tirhut rebelled and assumed independence, it is said that Todarmal induced the Zemindars to reduce their supplies with a view to dispersing the rebels. The exact territorial limit of Gopala's authority is not clear. The Mughal conquest of Tirhut opened a new era of peace and progress. Sadar Choudhary was the highest financial officer in Tirhut, of which Darbhanga was the headquarters. Mahesa Thakura was the highest financial officer and the position was held by his successors. Under Sadar Choudhary were (a) Choudhary and (b) Qanungo; and under Choudhary, there was a Muqaddam or the village head. There were seven hundred Savars and eighty thousand paid troops (**Maashir**; Patna, 1946). The **AT** says that Mir Dayanata Ali was the Fauzdar of Darbhanga and Bansrai Choudhary, Makhdum Shah, Sultan Hussain and Khantam Choudhary were the important officials and contemporaries of Akbar (p. 14). Gopala Thakura was followed by his brother Parmananda Thakura who died issueless, and he was followed by his brother (youngest) Subhankara Thakura. He is credited with having founded Subhankarpur near Darbhanga and is believed, in traditional sources, to have been very brave.

Subhankara Thakura was followed by Purushottam Thakura (1617-1641). During the time of Jahangir, Darbhanga and Hajipur were assigned to Abdulla Khan as Jagir. Jahangir also granted some land to a Maulvi to preach Islam at Darbhanga. Purushottam Thakura was invited by the imperial revenue collector, who came round to collect tribute, at Quilaghat in Darbhanga and then treacherously murdered.[31] The culprit is said to have been punished by the emperor. He is believed to have been succeeded by Narayana Thakura and the latter by Sundara Thakura (1641-1668). For purely administrative reasons, Tirhut used to be mentioned separately from Bihar, Champaran and Hajipur[32] for some time. From the time Jahangir and Shahjehan, Tirhut formed a part of the administration of Bihar.[33] During the time of Shahjehan, Tirhut acquired prominence. Etasama, Mirza Abdul Rasul Khan, Nawab Sajawar Khan, Mirza Abdul Mali and Mirza Khan Marhum were fauzdars of Darbhanga. It is believed that during the reign of Sundara Thakura, Tirhut was resurveyed and a fresh revenue roll was prepared.[34] Jha and Ahmed have brought to light the **Mazharnama** of Sundara Thakura (op.cit.), which indicates that there was a division of property prior to the accession of Sundara Thakura. The document was written in 1062 AH (=1652 AD). How can there be a division without some landed property? From this grant, it is evident that some land was given as grants either to Mahesa Thakura or to Gopala Thakura. The **Mazharnama** contains names of various persons of the dynasty. Its exact nature is not clear. In one of the indigenous documents of Tirhut, we have the name of Nawab Hakikat Ali of Darbhanga or Tirhut and emperor Shahjehan.[35] The document is dated L S 507 (=1628-29 AD) and refers to the sale of a **dasa** or slave. Two learned Brahmanas from Tirhut were presented before Shahjehan, who being pleased with their extraordinary learning, granted them each a robe of honour and a cash reward of one thousand rupees.[36] Another Maithila author, Raghudeva Misra, is said to have composed a **Virudavali** in praise of Shahjehan to prefer his claims to the Raj of Tirhut as an inheritance from his maternal grandfather, Achyuta Thakura, to become the Raja of Tirhut.[37] That there was some difference amongst the members of the family is evident from the **Mazharnama**, quoted above.



Sundara Thakura was succeeded by his son Mahinatha Thakura. He was a powerful ruler and he had some difficulties with the contemporary ruler of Bettia, named Gajasimha, who had obtained the title of Raja from Shahjehan. Mahinatha Thakura was a contemporary of Aurangzeb. During the reign of Aurangzeb, Mirza Khan, Fedai Khan, and Shekh Mohammad Jiwan were the fauzdars of Darbhanga. Morang (the Terai area now under Nepal) was causing serious trouble to the authority of the Mughals in North Bihar and Bengal. Both Shahjehan and Aurangzeb paid serious attention to the problem and they rightly pressed into service the fauzdars of Darbhanga and the rulers of the Khandavala dynasty. It was in 1664 AD that the Mughal troops led by Mirza Khan, fauzdar of Darbhanga, entered Morang, a hill country west of Cooch Bihar and north of Purnea, Saharsa, and Darbhanga districts. Forces from Gorakhpur under its Fauzdar Illahavardi Khan, were also pressed into service. Mirza Khan died there and then others were deputed. Services of Fedai Khan, Ibrahim Khan, and Saista Khan were also utilised for the purpose. Morang king had shown signs of rebellion and Mahinatha Thakura deputed his younger brother Narpati Thakura to help Aurangzeb's army in suppressing the rebellious chief.[38] For the timely help, Mahinatha Thakura won the favour of Aurangzeb. Morang chiefs were chastised and the elephants were captured. Aurangzeb was pleased to issue a farman[39] in favour of Raja Mahinatha Thakura, the extracts of which are: "....since the news of the sincerity and good service of Mahinatha Thakura ....who is obedient to Islam and subservient to officers, in the conquest of the country of Palamau ....and in the suppression of the Zemindars of Morang alongwith the late Nawab Mirza Khan, ...therefore by way of grace and in order to honour (the grantee) the Sadar Zemindari and the settlement of Sarkar Tirhut alongwith the services (?) of Zemindari, Milkiat, Choudharai and Moqaddami of Parganas of Dharmapur, Sarkar Farrukhabad, alias Munger .....and the Zemindari of Pargana Haveli, Purnea and Tajpur, pertaining to Bengal ....together with a Khilat and Mahi Maratib are granted in heredity ....to the said, Mahinatha." The following duties are specified:

i. Collection of revenue.
ii. Supervision of financial and administrative affairs.
iii. Suppression of rebels.
iv. Depute amins in each Pargana, get the cultivated and fallow lands measured, contact the ryots, extend Tacavi loan, and strive for the increase of revenue; correct all the papers and make them up-to-date.
v. Should collect Nankars and Dasturs in accordance with the established regulations.

It is evident that he was made the hereditary Zemindar of the Parganas by 1665 AD as noted below:

BIHAR – I. Sarkar Tirhut including the valley of the mountain – 102 parganas.

II. Sarkar Munger, pargana Dharampur – 1 pargana.

BENGAL – I. Sarkar Purnea – 5 parganas.

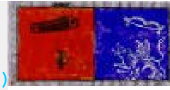
II. Sarkar Tajpur – 2 parganas.

Aurangzeb further directed the Governor of Bihar, Lashkar Khan, to honour Mahinatha Thakura who along with his brother Narpati Thakura had helped the Mughal forces in suppressing the Morang rebels.

The Governor was directed to honour this Hindu Brahmana so that he may feel honoured in the eyes of his neighbours.

The accounts, set forth above, are further vindicated by the traditional sources. Mr Bakshi, the author of the voluminous history of the Khandavalas, informs us that on the recommendation of Mirza Khan, the emperor was pleased enough to honour Mahinatha Thakura.[40] He further tells us that Aurangzeb honoured with Khilat and Zemindari. He refers to the acquisition of Zemindari in Bengal, which was refused by Mahinatha Thakura on religious ground. This remains to be verified. This grant of Aurangzeb is important for a study of the history of land revenue system. The duties of Qanungo are also specified therein. The aforesaid grant further states that the Raja of Tirhut was helpful to the Mughals in conquering Palamau. It was under Mahinatha Thakura that the Khandavalas reached the height of their glory.

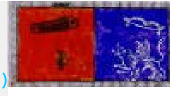
He was succeeded by Narpati Thakura (also mentioned in the aforesaid grant). He distinguished himself as one of the greatest supporters of the Mughal authority in Bihar and thereby secured the stability of the house of Khandavalas in Tirhut. There were various chiefs and officials, no doubt, but through the constant efforts of Mahinatha and Narpati, the Khandavalas came to occupy a pre-eminent position in Mithila and with the acquisition of the grant from Aurangzeb, they came to be regarded as the real rulers, certainly subject to the authority of the Mughals. Narpati Thakura was succeeded by his son Raghava Simha, whose exploits in the history of Mithila have inspired a number of poets. He adopted the surname ‘Simha’. He was involved in a battle with the Raja of Bettia, named Dhrubasimha.[41] He is called ‘Mithilapati’, ‘Nripa’, ‘Raja’ etc., in contemporary **Prasastis** and poems. The famous Afghan chief, Sardar Khan, was in the service of Raghavasimha (1700-1739 AD). Bihari Lal informs us that he was honoured with the title of Raja by Aurangzeb.[42] Local traditions affirm that during his reign Nawab Zainuddin Ahmad Khan came to Tirhut and stayed at village Bhaura, the capital of the Darbhanga Raja.[43] He is said to have secured the Patta Mukkarari of Sarkar Tirhut on payment of Rupees one lac per year. From the document, granted to Mahinatha Thakura it appears that the number of Mahals in Tirhut was increased from 74 to 102 during the time of Aurangzeb and the supervision of the entire area was entrusted to the house of Khandavalas.[44] We learn from **Chahar-Gulsan** that the revenue of Sarkar Tirhut was further raised in 1720 after revision of the existing rates. After the death of Aurangzeb, the central authority was weakened and the decentralising forces were discernible. Alivardi became the Deputy Governor of Bihar in 1733. The activities of the Banjaras disturbed the area of Tirhut. Tirhut was infested with the Banjaras, who, in the guise of traders and travellers, laid the country under contribution and plundered the area. With the help of Afghans of Darbhanga (some of whom were in the service of Raghavasimha), Alivardi succeeded in sending an expedition against the Banjaras. They were disgorged and driven out and that emboldened Alivardi to take effective steps against the refractory Hindu chief.[45] In North Bihar, he had to deal with Raja Dhruba Simha of Bettia and Raja Raghava Simha of Bhaura (Bhanwra of Gladwin – a Mahal in Sarkar Tirhut). The Muzaffarnama[46] says, “The Raja of Bhaura, proud of his hills and jungles and strong places, used to refuse obedience to the orders of the Governor. This year, too, he (certainly Raghava Simha) began to assert his independence. Alivardi marched against him, making his saddle his sleeping place. The Raja, too, prepared for fight. A severe encounter took place, the like of which had not been seen before. At last the Raja took to flight.



Abdul Karim was appointed to pursue him. He made forced Marches, seized the wife and children of the Raja on the skirt of Dhaulagiri hill (?) and sent them to the Governor. The victors returned to Patna fort, the Raja made his submission, the district was brought under the administration and he returned to his home." He was properly confirmed as Raja. From the above account, it appears that Raghavasimha attempted at independence but was subdued. Raghavasimha was one of the most powerful kings of the Khandavala dynasty. He defeated Bhupasimha of Pargana Panchamahala in Nepal. His authority extended up to Pargana Dharmapur (Purnea), where one of his revenue collectors, Biru Kurmi, usurped power and declared himself as Birshah.[47] He was subdued. Raghava Simha enjoyed the privilege of being a revenue collector, the rate being raised from $1^1/_4$% to 2%. He was required to do justice and to relieve peasantry of distress. He was equally answerable to the Nawab for the revenue, collected through his dependents under his superintendence. Family trouble also disturbed Raghava Simha, who also used to pay regularly the annual nazrana to Raja Dharanidhara, the Nawab's Dewan.[48] His nephew, Eknatha Thakura, complained of the enormous profit earned by the Raja and that led Alivardi to seize his property for some time. In fine, it can be said that Raghava Simha further strengthened the house of Darbhanga and there was all round progress. He died in 1739 and was succeeded by Raja Visnu Simha (1739-1743) and on his death, Narendra Simha ascended the throne.

The reign of Narendra Simha forms yet another landmark in the history of Mithila. He went on a pilgrimage to Jagannatha and on his return, he met the Nawab at Murshidabad. There he was honoured with the title of 'Raja' on condition that he should help the Nawab in times of war. The autonomy of Mithila was preserved and Narendra Simha is credited with having re-organised the administration of Mithila.[49] Zainuddin had secured the help of Raghava Simha against the Afghans and it was for this purpose that the former had gone to Bhaura. Narendra Simha, during Raghava Simha's life time, had helped Zainuddin against the Afghans and the credit of Nawab's victory over the Afghans elicited a poet's appreciation.[50] It appears that Zainuddin, in his campaign against Mustafa Khan (Babarganj), secured the help of Narendra Simha of Darbhanga and the Dronavara ruler of Narhan. It is said that Tirhut was subjected to re-assessment. In his earlier attempts to suppress the rebellious Hindu chiefs, Alivardi was aided by the Afghans. Alivardi carried off a large booty and subjected the area to re-assessment.[51] The most important event of his reign was the battle of Kandarpighat, an account of which has been faithfully preserved by Lal Kavi. This ballad of Lal Kavi is an important source for the study of this event and cannot be rejected outright in the present state of our knowledge.

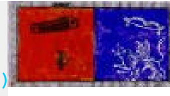
What ultimately was the cause of this battle, we cannot exactly say. A former ruler, who had stood in good stead in Alivardi's days of distress, ultimately became his enemy and came to fight is certainly an enigma. In the present state of our knowledge, no obvious reasons can be adduced either in favour or against. Narendra Simha is credited with having brought under control various petty Zemindars of the territory.[52] Some of his own men complained against him to Raja Rama Narayana to the effect that he (Narendra) was behaving like an independent ruler and was trying to throw off the shackles of the imperial authority. Are we to believe that a simple complaint from the erstwhile partners was the cause of the sanguinary battle of Kandarpighat? It seems plausible to accept the theory that the cause of this war was intentional delay in paying off the imperial due and other allied taxes.[53] Bakshi tells us that one Prthvi Jha complained to Raja Rama Narayana and requested him to go to Delhi and see that the



emperor (Ahmed Shah) brings the unruly, Narendra Simha, to book.[54] Another account tells that the army reached Bhaunra for the collection of tribute and there they came to learn that the king was bent upon settling the issues by the force of arm.[55] We learn from the **Riyaz** (P. 296) that the tract of Bhanwra had never previously been trod by the feet of the armies of former Nazims. It appears that Alivardi was the first man to tread this tract. Lal Kavi has given the following description of this battle. The battle was fought on the bank of river Balan between Narendra Simha and the five thousand forces sent by Raja Rama Narayana headed by Bhikhari Mahta and Salabat Rai.[56] Bhikhari Mahta was the leader of this campaign against Narendra Simha.[57] Bakshi says that Rama Narayana took such drastic step against Narendra Simha as he was not aware of the earlier farmans granted to the Raja of Tirhut.[58] The aim of Rama Narayana was to take khas possession of Tirhut from Raja Narendra Simha. Narendra Simha came out victorious.

In connection with the description of this battle (**MD**, 84-93), Lal Kavi has supplied us with the names of the following important personalities: Zainuddin Ahmed Khan, Rama Narayana, Bhikhari Mahta, Salabat Roy (possibly Salabat Jang, nephew of Alivardi), Bakht Singh[59], an ally of Alivardi and Namdar Khan. All these persons were on the side of Alivardi. Those, supporting Narendra Simha, included Mitrajit (of Tekari?), Umrao, Halaray, Dronwar kings, Kesho Shah, and Ajit Shah of Narhan, Ghaziram, Sher Khan and Jafar Khan. There is little doubt that all of them were contemporaries. The fact that Zainuddin was himself leading the battle indicates that it must have taken place before his death in 1748 AD. The question arises – how could Rama Narayana be called a Raja then? Prior to this appointment, he was the private secretary of Zainuddin.[60] He fought for Zainuddin against Mustafa Khan in 1745 and was raised to the post of Diwan in the time of Janaki Ram.[61] He was entrusted with the supervision of the powerful Zemindars of Bihar and it, thus, appears plausible to suggest that complaints against the ruler was first of all made to him. He was a trusted ally. Bhikhari Mahta was working under him and later became the fauzdar of Darbhanga. All the native Rajput chiefs of Tirhut sided with Narendra Simha. It has been rightly asserted that during the period under review all the Hindu chiefs secretly wished for a change and were in search of opportunities for throwing off the shackles of Muslim[62], and it is, therefore, natural that when Narendra Simha raised the banner of revolt, he was supported by the local Zemindars.

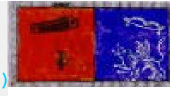
It is reasonable to believe that the account of Lal Kavi about the battle of Kandarpighat is to a great extent correct. There is nothing to doubt about the identification of personalities involved and the cause about the contest. The battle took place in the month of Aswin (September-October), just after the Durga Puja, when Zainuddin was staying at Bhanwra in 1745-46. It was during his stay here that he received a letter from Alivardi to proceed to Murshidabad through the tracts lying to the north of the Ganges. Why did the Deputy Governor condescend to Bhanwra without any reason? The seriousness of the situation might have called his physical presence in the region. The court historian possibly ignored this important episode because of the defeat of the Nawab's army at the hands of Narendra Simha. All traditional sources are unanimous on the point that Narendra Simha was victorious. The **AT** (p. 34) says that Alivardi ultimately renewed the grant and the autonomous status of Mithila was preserved.[63] The cordial relationship was restored.



Narendra Simha is said to have curbed the power of the terai kings of Nepal. In order to commemorate the name of his father, he founded a city on the Kausiki river, named Raghavpur (modern Raghopur in the district of Saharsa). He gave Jai Kishun a grant of the villages of Charaut and Madhwapur for the foundation of a Matha.[64] He had one of his wives from Mahisi (Saharsa) and at the request of this queen, he is said to lay the foundation of the present temple of Mahisi. He also granted the villages of Bewan and Bishunpatti in Pargana Malhnigopala (Saharsa) to the mother of Babu Pratap Singh for maintenance in 1759. Like the earlier rulers of Darbhanga, he maintained the high position of scholarship and culture and made liberal grants for these purpose. The Colophons of **MSS**, written or compiled during his reign, speak volume about his achievements. He died in 1770 and till 1778 his wife retained the authority.

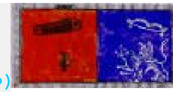
In 1778, Raja Pratapa Simha became king.[65] He was responsible for the transfer of capital from Bhanwra to Jhanjharpur and later on to Darbhanga. He is called '**Mithilesa**' in local tradition. After the acquisition of Dewani in 1765, the **EIC** had begun to take active part in these areas. We learn from the contemporary records that the crime position in Purnea and Tirhut was deteriorating. In a letter, dated 27th July, 1771, the superintendent of Sarkar Tirhut wrote to the Chief of the Council at Patna, "There are internal robbers who frequent this Sarkar and these alongwith the thieves who are residents of this Sarkar have grown too formidable and they are supported by Raja Pratapa Simha."[66] In this letter, the Superintendent sought permission to order the confinement of the Raja. In reply, the Chief entirely approved of his endeavours to clear Tirhut of the gangs and directed him to make full enquiry if the charges against the Raja were well founded, and in case it appeared that the Raja really encouraged them and they were his men, then he should be kept at Patna. Pratapa Simha granted a rent-free Brahmottar lands to one Brahmadatta Jha in villages Surson and Iforepahi (in Pargana Bhour) and the same was confirmed by Emperor Shah Alam II.[67] Like his predecessors, he also made a **bishnprit** grant to Bhawanath Sharma for teaching and supporting students. The interest of the **EIC** in Tirhut grew more and more after 1772, when a Board of Revenue was established in Calcutta and the revenue of Tirhut was settled for five years on the farming system. In 1774, Tirhut was subordinated to the Provincial Council at Patna. The grant of Sadui was confirmed by Kasim Ali Khan. In 1777, the Board directed the collection of the detailed information for the purposes of revenue settlement and in 1782, Francis Grand was appointed the first Collector of Tirhut. Pratapa Simha was followed by Madhava (Madho) Simha in 1785 and he permanently transferred his capital to Darbhanga.

The reign of Madhava Simha constitutes an epoch in the history of the Khandavala dynasty of Mithila. At the time of his accession, Francis Grand was the Collector of Tirhut with his headquarters at Darbhanga and the Raja, therefore, thought it wise to shift his headquarters to Darbhanga on a permanent basis. Attempts were afoot to reorganise the revenue administration and the East India Company was busy collecting data in this regard. Shah Alam II confirmed the hereditary grant of Sarkar Tirhut and Pargana Dharmpur on Madhava Simha and his grant and other grants are also mentioned in the **ST**. When Cornwallis introduced his permanent settlement, Madhava Simha was not in a mood to accept the settlement, specially the terms proposed by the Collector and the Board, on the ground that no regard was being paid to his **malikana** and **dasturant**. Madhava Simha rightly claimed the lordship of the whole of Tirhut on the basis of ancient hereditary right. For the redress of his grievances, he made a petition to



Shah Alam II for the confirmation of his hereditary Zemindari and the Emperor, in his forty second year, issued the Firman confirming the Zemindari on April 10, 1800 AD. Before the grant was received, Madhava Simha was compelled by the British masters to accept partly the terms of the permanent settlement and on the 7th April, 1800, the **EIC** issued an **amal-dastak** settling certain villages permanently upon the Raja. All his claims were not accepted by the Company and parts of his estates were settled with others in Bihar and the settlement formed the basis of Zemindari (also called Raj Darbhanga) till its abolition in 1947.[68] Madhava Simha played a very important part in the contemporary politics and that is evident from the contemporary records.[69] The robbers were infesting the area and later on the fakirs and the Sannyasis also joined against the atrocities of the **EIC**. The Purnea Collectorate Records inform us that the Chief of Purnea had to send military force under Captain William to check the fakirs. These Fakirs and the Sannyasis were protected and encouraged by the Raja of Morang. Khurram Shah, the Chief of one of the Fakirs, was released by the Raja of Nepal and was encamping at Mutteani (Matihani), a village belonging to Morang on the boundary of Tirhut. He was threatening Raja Madhava Simha to pay a visit unless he was paid a good amount. This fact is confirmed by a letter of 9th January, 1795, to the Collector of Tirhut informing him that Khurram had gathered on the borders of Tirhut with a large body of armed men with hostile intentions.[70] In 1792, the nankar lands, the dasturant and malikana were resumed by the Government.

An account of the contemporary Tirhut is preserved in the Muzaffapur Collectorate Records.[71] The whole area of Tirhut from Hajipur to Purnea was passing through the unprecedented famine caused due to (i) the injudicious interference of the Government; (ii) to the absence of the means of inter-communication; and (iii) to the lack of imagination and foresight. Hunter observed[72], “Our histories are the narratives of the English conquest ....not the histories of the Indian people. We hardly know anything of the labouring masses ....or of the customs and usages on which we promised to build up our system of rural law.” The local rulers in the area, no doubt, helped the suffering humanity but that help was just like a drop in the ocean. Taking advantage of the unstable situation, the Zemindars used to extort money from different sources.[73] In 1782, it was ordained that no Zemindar and other land holders paying revenue to Government were permitted to alienate lands without the express authority of the Government.[74] In 1787, R Bathurst was directed to take charge of Tirhut over and above the Parganas north of the Ganges. It appears from the correspondences that the Raja of Tirhut had given on rent some lands to Mr Smith and the Collector of Tirhut was asked to communicate to Mr Smith that he could not claim exemption (**Mafi**) upon the verbal promise of the Raja. Mr Grand, the Collector of Tirhut, had also observed in his account a considerable sum as due to Mr Smith to the Raja of Tirhut. In such cases, the Raja was entitled to expect all the due assistance from the Government, but suspension of the realisation of the Government revenue for this account could not be accepted. Bathurst notified to the Zemindars that in case of non-payment of revenue within 15 days from the date of demand, their lands would be attached. The Collector was further directed to attach all the property of Raja Madhava Simha arising from his dastoorat.[75] Madhava Simha had to contend against the Britishers for a pretty long time in getting his rights recognised and he had to fight a very long case. Darbhanga was at that time the capital of Sarkar Tirhut. The British were not pleased with Madhava Simha.



The Collector of Tirhut in 1788 was in favour of the resumption of rent-free lands but Raja Madhava Simha raised various objections against resumption. In one of his petitions in 1186 Fasli, he obtained the lease of Sarkar Tirhut from the Governor-General in Council as a **Mokarrijama**. In 1188 Fasli, Maharaja Kalyan Simha offered an increase upon the **mokarrari** lease of Madhava Simha. In 1189 Fasli, Madhava Simha obtained the favour of Sarkar Tirhut upon the same term as Maharaja Kalyan Simha. In 1195 Fasli, due to the mismanagement and oppression of his **naib**, Madan Thakura, Madhava Simha was unable to fulfil the engagement to the East India Company as was stipulated in the **Kabuliyats**. As such, Mr Bathurst, the Collector, sent for him as a prisoner for having fallen in balance at the end of the year. In order to liquidate company's money, he had to borrow money and sell a part of his property.[76] The Collector of Tirhut in 1789 questioned the authority of the Khandavalas. Bathurst wrote about Madhava Simha, "He was a man in every way incapable of managing so extensive a farm, or in fact, any farm whatsoever." His Zemindari was settled with Faizuddin and Barkatulla Khan. Madhava Simha began to conspire with others against this arrangement but he ultimately got back his due in 1793. The Zemindari was later on restored to him. In 1789, the Collector of Tirhut opposed the ideas about the fixed settlement of land (the zemindari system) and in this connection, he observed, "If unhappily the attempt should be finally and unconditionally insisted upon, it will shortly follow that we shall have now battle to fight, and new conquest to achieve."[77] In one of the petitions[78], dated 5th October, 1789, from the merchants of Darbhanga, it appears that Madhava Simha used to realise Rs 10/- on each boat and two annas on each bullock over and above which they were forced to pay besides marriage and other duties, though they were not his ryots. They, therefore, solicited the attention of the Board of Justice.

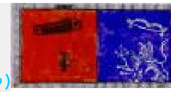
In 1793, a proposal was made for the re-organisation of the district of Tirhut, keeping in view the compactness of the area. The proposal was that Tirhut should be bounded on the north by Nepal, on the south by the Ganges, by the Kosi in the east and Gandak on the west[79], with Darbhanga as the capital. Madhava Simha played a very prominent role in the contemporary politics of Darbhanga and Nepal.[80] In March 1795, the dasturant claim of Raja Madhava Simha was well founded.[81] A letter of May, 1799, indicates that he had his authority in the district of Purnea.[82] He is called the proprietor of Pargana Dharmpur. At one stage it was thought that alternative settlement of the estate of Madhava Simha be made in case he refused to accede to the terms and conditions of the Government.[83] A letter from the Board of Revenue (13th January, 1801) mentions that the Parvanas, issued by the late acting Collector, regarding the adjustment of account of Tikadar in the Zemindari of Raja Madhava Simha, were entirely unauthorised and consequently they could not serve as grounds for the Raja's claim to a suspension or remission of revenue.[84] Another letter of February 8, 1803, the Collector of Tirhut deals with the issue of the realisation[85] of rent from the Maliks and reflects upon their conduct in the matter. He complains, "....The Maliks are not even ready to pay that much of amount which they had committed of their own accord and all regulations were very little cared by them. ....Big Zemindars did all sorts of improprieties and rallied round themselves small zemindars. ...." It appears from a letter of 1804 that Parganas Chai and Pharkiya were separated from Tirhut and added to Bhagalpur.[86]

It was during the time of Madhava Simha that the Zemindari was confirmed. From the nature of the correspondences now available it is clear that he asserted his overlordship over whole of Sarkar Tirhut. After his infructuous efforts for more than twelve years for recognition of his authority over the whole

of Sarkar Tirhut, he accepted the Permanent Settlement. A very important document of his reign (Saka 1716, i.e., 1794 AD) has been discovered and published. That is the judgement of a Maithila Hindu Court in Sanskrit deciding the possession of two rival Brahmana families over a slave girl and is of unique importance. On the basis of this judgement, it is believed that Madhava Simha was possessed of absolute power in Tirhut. He died in 1807. He was succeeded by Raja Chatra Simha, who is said to have rendered valuable services to the Government at the time of Nepal War in 1814-15. Lord Hastings conferred on him the title of Maharaja. There was some family trouble during the reign but was, ultimately, amicably settled. He ruled from 1807 to 1839 AD. Mr W Jane, Collector of Tirhut, had to deal with him regarding the Dastoorant and Malikana.[87] He was now called the Raja of Darbhanga. It was during his reign that the boundary between Nepal AND Tirhut was demarcated. **In 1817, some Terai territory of Tirhut was transferred to Nepal**. The Raja of Tirhut, Chatra Simha, was granted remuneration for supplying Barkandaza to Company's officer during the Nepal War.[88] He was followed by his son, Rudra Simha. Again there was some family dispute. **The Privy Council decreed that the property was impartiable** and since then the inheritance is regulated by the Law of Primogeniture. Rudra Simha died in 1850 and was succeeded by Maheshwara Simha who held the estate till 1860 when it was taken over by the Government as of Court of Wards. In 1880, Maharaja Lakshmiswara Simha occupied the throne and was succeeded in 1898 by Maharaja Rameswara Simha, who was decorated with the title of Maharajadhiraja in 1920. He died in 1929 and was succeeded by Maharaja Kameswara Simha who ruled till September 30, 1962. After his death[88(a)], a trust has been created.

The records of East India Company, Collectorate records of Bhagalpur, Purnea, Munger, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and recently discovered records throw a flood of light on the status of the Khandavalas of Mithila. They were honoured both by the Mughals and the British. The case documents also throw sufficient light on the history of the Darbhanga Raj. The grants issued by the Khandavalas, bear the insignia of fish, which according to **Siyar-ul-Mutukherin**, was introduced by the Mughals in India, as the highest military decoration. The insignia might have been granted by the Mughals to Gopala Thakura for his signal service to the Mughal army. It was emblem of high nobility or sovereignty. The Darbhanga Raj had huge administrative machinery and when the Indian National Congress was established in 1885, Maharaja Lakshmiswara Simha made liberal contributions. Following the footsteps of the earlier rulers of Mitila, the Khandavalas also patronised learning and education.[89]

The Raj Archives is yet a sealed book for many and as and when the records are thrown open, it would be possible to re-write a comprehensive history of the dynasty. The documents, discovered recently, are very interesting and important as they throw sidelights on the contemporary system of land and revenue administration and in the grant of Aurangzeb, the duties of Qanungoes and Choudharies are explicitly specified. The difficulty is that there is no mention of the estate in **Ain-i-Akbari** or any other contemporary records.



CHAPTER XV

MITHILA AND NEPAL

A STUDY IN POLITICAL HISTORY

INTRODUCTION: The Nepal valley originally consisted of a lake called Naga Basa, or Kalihrda, the residence of Naga Karkotaka.[1] It was fourteen miles in length and four miles in breadth. The lake was desiccated by Manjusri, who came from Panchasirsa parvata in Mahachina, by cutting open the mountain on the south, and constructed on the dry bed of the lake, the temple of Svayambhunatha. The origin of the name 'Nepal' is mysterious and no positive account is found anywhere, though various legends and tales are there in the puranic literature. Though few volumes, on the history of Nepal, have been written, a comprehensive history of that important country is yet a desideratum.[2] The history of Nepal, since time immemorial, is closely linked up with the history of Mithila. Mithila has been the seat of different religious movements and thoughts and Nepal provided the soil on which these movements flourished. Even the Aryanisation of Nepal was possible through the land of Mithila. Keeping this end in views, an attempt has been made in the following lines to study the political relationship between these two countries.

SOURCES: The sources for the study of the history of Nepal are meagre. The available sources are conflicting. The **Vamsavalis**, though an important source, are the bedrock of inaccurate and conflicting statements and hence , in handling this particular source, we have to be a bit cautious. Epigraphy, the solid foundation of history, is in its infancy in Nepal, while archaeological materials are also few and far between. In such a state of affairs, there can be no solid and positive conclusive evidences for a scientific and accurate history. Authorities like Kirpatrick, Wright, Bendall, Landon, Levi, Petech, Tucci, Margaret Fischer, Regmi, other local historians and others have fallen victim to unstable sources involving serious inaccuracies and even the latest native writer, D R Regmi, has not succeeded in avoiding the pitfalls. Bhagwan Lal Indraji's pioneer work in the field of Nepal's history and epigraphy could not be continued by later scholars in the same spirit with the result that we today stand on no better footing than the late lamented scholar. H P Sastri's pioneer research in this respect is worth emulating. Rahul Sankrityayan's '**Nepal**' has not been published as promised by a Press of Patna. It was through Rahulji's kindness that I could see it when he was alive. Jayaswal's work attempted to solve some chronological problems. Nepal is awaiting the spade of the archaeologists and the critical eyes of the linguists, without which the reconstruction of a scientific history of that country is next to impossible. The solution of different problems of Nepal history will go a long way off in revealing the unexplained mystery of the history of Mithila.

THE KIRATA DYNASTY: Nothing definite is known about the early history of Nepal. In dim past, Nepal, like various other parts of northern India, was the chief centre of non-Aryan civilisation, having its own distinctive type of culture. Between 590 BC and 110 AD Nepal was the chief centre of the Kirata culture.[3] Kirata occurs in the **Sukla-Yajurveda**.[4] It has been suggested that the Kiratas were located in the eastern Nepal.[5] The term 'Kirata' indicated the wild non-Aryan tribe living in the mountains and in the north-eastern areas of India, who were Mongoloid in origin.[6] Sylvain Levi first proposed the Mongoloid racial affinities of the Kiratas[7]. From the **Mahabharata**, we learn that Mahadeva took the guise of Kirata to test Arjuna when he was practising religious penance in the Himalayas.[8]

There is absolutely no ground for any doubt that north-eastern India was associated with the Kirata culture. The **Mahabharata** testifies to it. They were the dwellers of the eastern Himalayas. Bhima in his **Digvijaya**, meets Kiratas in the east after leaving the Videha country.[9] They were of yellow clour. Levi has shown that they were associated with the **Mlechchas**, **Chinas**, etc. The **Ramayana** also supports the view that they were of yellow colour.[10] According to **Visnu** and **Markandeya Puranas**, the Kiratas were easterners. They had occupied the southern tracts of the Himalayas and the whole of north-eastern India, north Bihar contiguous to Nepal and to the north of the Ganges. It was through these countries that trade from China was carried on into the parts of the Gangetic India. They played an important part in the history of Nepal and contributed a good deal towards the development of Nepali culture. The Kiratas may thus be called the native dynasty of Nepal. They ruled for a long time. The beginning of this dynasty is to be dated about 600 BC.

According to the **Vamsavalis**, there were about 26 to 29 Kirata kings.[11] They had their capital at Gokarna in the north of Nepal valley. They prepared the ground for the Indo-Mongoloid domination in the affairs of Nepal and development of Hindu culture. Buddha is said to have visited Nepal. About 312 BC, a division took place among the Jainas when Sambhutavijaya died. Soon after famine began in northern India and it lasted for about twelve years. Bhadrabahu, a Jain saint, went to the South and returned after the famine was over. He resigned his headship of the Jain faith and returned to Nepal to spend his life. The Jain council, held at Patna, decided to have him among its midst. Sthulabhadra went to Nepal and obtained from him the fourteen **purvas**. It was through the efforts of Asoka that Buddhism became popular in Nepal. Sthumiko of Nepal is said to have been a contemporary of Asoka. In Kautilya's **Arthasastra**, we have the mention of sheep's wool blankets from Nepal (**Naipalikam**).[12] Asoka visited Ruminidei and erected 48 stupas there. It was probably in the reign of Sthumiko, that he visited Nepal and introduced Buddhism there. The Nepal Chronicle holds that during the time of Asoka, the autonomy of Nepal was maintained under Kiratas. Asoka's son-in-law Devapal and his daughter resided there. Dasrath had some sort of control over Nepal.

The continuity of the association between Nepal and Bihar was maintained during the years following the decline of the Mauryan power. The Sunga coins have been discovered in western Nepal. The coins show that the Sungas had some sort of loose control over the Nepalese territory.[13] During the rule of the Kiratas, the Kushanas probably entered Nepal through Champaran. Numismatic evidence show that the Kushanas had extended their sway up to Champaran, as will be evident from a hoard of sixty copper coins, discovered from village Radhiya, which is marked in the pillar of Asoka. Another hoard of Kushana coins was discovered in the neighbourhood of Khatmandu. These coins belong to Weima Kadphises and

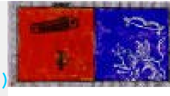
Kanishka. If any reliance can be placed on this solitary evidence, it can be asserted that the Kushanas ruled in Nepal.[14]

The Kiratas, though ruling in Nepal for centuries, had to feel the jerks every now and then. Despite their political instability, they contributed a good deal towards the establishment of political order and cultural life. It has been suggested by a competent authority that the Indo-Mongoloid first established in India and then in Nepal. Even the Newars have been described as descended from the most cultured groups of Indo-Mongoloid in the basin of the Bagmati river. The Newars probably entered in the 3rd century BC[15], when Asoka built a number of Buddhist **Chaityas** at Patan. The later Mahayana Buddhism of Nepal was taken from Bihar in its ideas and rituals and same was the case with the **Saiva**, **Sakta**, and **Vaisnava** cults. These were due partly to the reaction of the early Mongoloids in north Bihar. Prior to the Aryanisation of this area, North Bihar was the chief centre of the Kirata culture.

The history of Nepal between 110 AD (date of the end of the Kirata dynasty) and 205 AD (beginning of the Lichchavi dyanasty) is practically blank in the sense that no recorded evidence is available for the period. It has been pointed out, on the basis of the Kushana coins, that the Kushanas filled the gap. In the **Brhatkatha** of Gunadhya, there is a reference to Raja Yasaketu, ruling in the city of Shiva in Nepaladesa.[16] How and when the Kirata rule came to an end, we do not know. It is said that Nepal was conquered by Indian king, Nimisha. The Nimisha dynasty ruled for about 145 years (205-350 AD) according to Jayaswal. There were five kings of this dynasty – Nimisha, Manaksha, Kakavarman, Pasupreksadeva and Bhaskarvarman. It was during the rule of this dynasty that Aryan population found shelter in Nepal. Pasupreksadeva founded the Pasupatinath temple and at the same time brought Aryan population from Hindustan.

There is a great confusion about the dates and chronology of this dynasty in the history of Nepal. We have no positive evidence to accept or reject any of the existing conflicting views. We know only this much that they were supplanted by the Lichchavis. Whether the Nimisha dynasty was, in any way, connected with the Lichchavis or not, is a matter of conjecture. Kirpatrick has made the confusion worst confounded in his treatment of the native sources. The last king of the Nimisha dynasty, Bhaskarvarman, adopted one Bhumivarman who calls his dynasty a **somavansi**. The later **Vamsavalis** begin a dynasty with Bhumivarman whose grandson was Jayadeva I (mentioned in the inscription of Jayadeva II). Kirpatrick treats the two groups as forming one dynasty '**Nevesit**' (Nimisha?). Jayaswal doubts and says, "There is no distinct dynasty of Somavansa of the five rulers in original authorities."[17]

THE LICHCHAVIS: Sober history records that the Lichchavis of Vaishali were closely connected with Nepal. There may be some element of truth in the statements that the eastern people, including the Lichchavis were of Mongoloid origin and had, later on, mixed up with the Aryans. Manu's description of the Lichchavis[18] of Vaishali supports our contention. Lichchavis have been placed on par with the Mallas and Khasas of Nepal, and these have been declared as Vratyas by Manu. Levi holds that the Brahmanical orthodoxy of Manu refused to be influenced here by the power and pre-eminence of the Lichchavis.[19] The Lichchavis were a well advanced people of north Bihar. Their power and organisation had won for them the status of the Kshatriya.

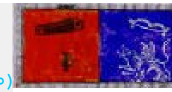


From the **Vamsavali** and other sources, it is evident that the Kirata rule was followed by the **Somavansi** and **Suryavansi** rulers. What Jayaswal calls the Nimisha dynasty is taken by another scholar as the **Somavansi dynasty**.[20] It seems that he has not been explicit as to the nature of the sources which are not only conflicting but confusing as well. Nimisha might have been the family titles of the **Somavansi** rulers who were five or seven in number. These five or seven rulers before the advent of the **Suryavansi** dynasty were probably the rulers on the plain or at Vaishali. The actual date of their accession is not known.

The so-called Nimisha dynasty was overthrown by the Lichchavis who ruled for about 400 or 500 years. The Era, started in Nepal in 111 AD, probably marks the accession of the Lichchavis to power. It is presumed that the Lichchavis established a monarchical government in Nepal near about the first century AD and started an era. The early Lichchavis emigrated themselves on the soil of Nepal and continued unabated for about five centuries. It is with the establishment of the **Suryavansi** dynasty that the actual historical period of Nepal begins. These two dynasties came from Mithila and for about five centuries there was a regular intercourse between Nepal and Mithila both political and cultural.[21] The first historical king was Jayadeva I and between him and Jayadeva II, the last of the line, there were about thirty-three kings.[22]

There is hardly any doubt that Nepal fell within the orbit of the Gupta Empire. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta is explicit on this point. He obtained the homage of the '**frontier ruler of Nepal**'[23] who, in all likelihood, belonged to the Suryavansi Lichchavi clan, which was spread from Mithila to Nepal. With regard to the Suryavansi rulers of Nepal, there is a good deal of confusion in the **Vamsavalis**. Kirpatrick adds five more names to this dynasty. These five names are given separately by the **Vamsavalis**, except the one used by Kirpatrick, under the name of **Somavansi** rulers, given above. The names of the Suryavansi rulers are available from various inscriptions.[24] The inscription of Jayadeva II supplies us with the names of twenty-three kings:

1. Bhumivarman (referred to above).
2. Chandravarman.
3. Jayadeva I (Jayavarma of the **Vamsavalis**, where nos. 1-14 have varman name endings).
4. Varshavarman (Vrish according to Kirpatrick).
5. Sarvavarman.
6. Prthvivarman.
7. Jyesthavarman.
8. Harivarman.
9. Kuveravarman.
10. Siddhivarman.
11. Hardatta. (He built four Narayan temples including one of Changunarayana and Nilkantha Jalasayana, a colossal lying figure of Visnu in the Gupta style).
12. Vasudatta.
13. Sripati.
14. Vasantadeva I.
15. Sivadeva I.



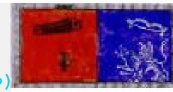
16. Rudradeva I, (Omitted by Kirpatrick. Levi regards him to be identical with Sivadeva and thinks that the name has been transferred from the Malla list.)
17. Vrishadeva II (a noted Buddhist).
18. Shankardeva. (It was during his reign that there was a revival of Saivism. He erected a trident at Pasupati. The big metal Nandi is attributed to him.)
19. Dharmadeva.
20. Mandeva.
21. Mahideva.
22. Vasantadeva II.

Nos. 1-3; 4-16 have been omitted in Jayadeva II's inscription.[25] The said inscription holds that Jayadeva I was the founder of the Nepal dynasty and was called the 'Victorious'.[26]

It was during this period that Vaisnavism was introduced in Nepal. The shrines of Changunarayana and Jalasayana are mentioned in the Harigaon inscription of Amsuvarman of the year 32 (lines 14-15). These are the finest examples of typically Gupta art. The Lichchavi kings of Nepal are known from their inscriptions and coins. The Changunarayana temple inscriptions of Mandeva tell us about the earlier kings. These kings followed different cults, e.g., Buddhism, Saivism, Brahmanism, Saktism, Vaisnavism, etc. It was during the rule of the Lichchavi king, Narendradeva, that the cult of Matsyendranath was introduced into Nepal. Under the Lichchavis, the Mahayana Buddhism was taking shape there.[27] Except for a short period, during which Amsuvarman and Jishnugupta ruled, the Lichchavis regained their power in Nepal.

In the present state of our knowledge, it is not possible for us to agree with Regmi that 'in its balmy days, the kingdom of Nepal occupied the portions of territory between the river Gandak and the Sunkosi.'[28] It is true that since time immemorial there was a link between Videha and Nepal and that during the rule of the Lichchavis it was an established fact. In the absence of any known defined boundary, it is not desirable to arrive at any hasty conclusion as Mr Regmi has done at more than one place. His other supposition, that '**Vaishali formed a part of Nepal till the death of Samudragupta**', is baseless and unfounded.[29] No amount of logic would convince any serious student of history of the possibility hinted at by Regmi. Vaishali's inclusion with the Gupta empire is an established fact. The Gupta supremacy in Nepal, on the other hand, is proved by more than one source.[30] The Gupta influence in Nepal is recorded in the **Vamsavali** and that stands confirmed by the **MMK**. Historically the Lichchavis ruled from 350 AD to 899 AD. There is nothing to detract us from the fact that the Lichchavi rule in Nepal was a reality. Number 33 of the **Vamsavali list**, Sivadeva, is said to have expelled the Guptas and restored the Suryavamsi or the Lichchavi dynasty (Kirpatrick).

AMSUVARMAN: It was during the time of the Lichchavi rule that one Mahasamanta, Amsuvarman, of the Thakuri dynasty came into prominence as the de facto ruler of Nepal in the first half of the seventh century AD. He was a very powerful ruler. He added a greater portion of the Terai area to his dominion and extended his dominion as far as Bettia to make his frontier co-terminus with that of Harshavardhan.[31] The grammarian, Chandravarman of the Nalanda University, was one of the luminaries of his court. Amsuvarman established the kingdom of Nepal and the tradition was continued by another



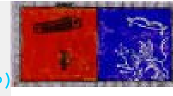
ruler named Jishnugupta. The death of Amsuvarman was marked by a revival of the Lichchavi power in Nepal under Narendradeva in 643 AD.

The Lichchavi rule continued for a considerable period in Nepal and that is confirmed by the **AMMK**.[32] Manadeva was born of the dynasty of the Lichchavis. He ruled for eighty years. It further refers to the contemporary dynasties, with the details of which we are not concerned here. Among the Gupta rulers, we have, between Jayagupta I and II, eight rulers.[33] Kirpatrick's **Vamsavali** contains an account , according to which Jayagupta II settled near Janakpur Terai. A coin mould of Jayagupta II was discovered in the Nalanda excavations.[34] As a result of the weakness of the Imperial Guptas, a branch from north Bihar entered Nepal.

Manadeva I[35] re-asserted his independence and revived the Lichchavi power. He was followed by Gunakadeva. The sun symbol, on the Pasupati series of the Lichchavi coinage of Nepal, simply denotes the **Suryavamsa** of the dynasty. The inscriptions of Sivadeva call him as the illustrious Lichchavi.[36] Yuanchwang says, "The king is of the caste of the Kshatriyas and belongs to the race of the Lichchavi."[37] Amsuvarman's continuation of the title of Mahasamanta till 633 proves that, till then, he recognised the lordship of the Lichchavi king.[38] His connections with Bihar are marked by certain matrimonial alliances of the seventh century AD. In the first quarter of the 7th century AD, Somadeva married Vatsadevi, daughter of the Maukhari king Bhogavarman and a grand-daughter of Adityasen, a later Gupta king of Magadha.

THE AHIRS: The reference to anarchy after Mandeva II in the **AMMK** is significant and leads to the probability of Ahir's intrusion into the valley of Nepal. While Jayaswal takes them to be a branch of the imperial Guptas[39], Levi and others have dismissed this dynasty as nothing more than chronological figment. **AMMK** refers to their being associated with Nepal and these so-called Gupta Ahirs find mention in some of the inscriptions.[40] The **Vamsavalis** calls them Ahirs from the 'plains of Hindustan.' The oldest authority, cited by Kirpatrick, definitely says that they were Rajput descendants from Mahipa Gopal and that they levied their army in the country, situated between Simaraongarh and Janakpur Terai. They subjugated the kingdom of Nepal.[41] Between 500 and 590 AD, there were five rulers of this dynasty of which Paramgupta (500 AD) is identified with the Parakrama of the **AMMK**. He wrested power from the Lichchavis. One of his grandsons ruled from Simaraongarh.[42] Another line of the same dynasty ruled in Terai, separated probably during the time of Jishnugupta. Jayagupta II's coins have been discovered from Champaran and Magadha.

The exit of Jishnugupta facilitated the appearance of the Lichchavis under Narendradeva and his allies probably in 643 or 644 AD. The Tang annals, the only source for the study of the period, preserve a good deal of account of the contemporary history. The **AMMK** account affords new and correct information, when it says that Udaya and Jishnu were the last kings of the Nepal kingdom and after them, rulers in Nepal became dependent on Mlechcha usurpers and kingship was lost. This refers to the absorption of Nepal into Tibet. Srongtsan Gampo married Amsuvarman's daughter. The Tibetan king was a powerful king in Central Asia. He introduced Buddhism into Tibet and had the Tibetans script devised by the Hindus. Under this Tibetan Emperor, Nepal passed under Tibetan control.[43]



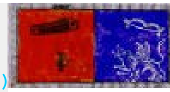
The Chinese embassy to Harshavardhana passed through Nepal in 646 AD. Harshavardhana was no more. The kingdom of Tirhut was usurped by Arjuna, probably a Gupta prince ruling over Tirhut as a governor of the Thaneswar house. He molested the Chinese ambassador. Nepal came forward to help the Chinese embassy with a force of 7,000 against Arjuna, who was defeated and taken prisoner.[44] This was followed by the occupation of Nepal and Tirhut by Tibet. The Tibetan domination continued unabated until 703, when Nepal rose to shake off the foreign domination and killed the Tibetan king in war. Dharmadeva's position (son of Sankardeva, the Lichchavi ruler) seems to have been great. We learn from the Changunarayana inscription of his son, Mandeva III, that Dharmadeva set up four pillars of victory. The Chinese sources confirm this point and the fact remains that the Tibetan king was killed by the king of Nepal.[45]

Thus it is evident that the Lichchavi restoration was attended with all round success. The Changunarayana inscription of Mandeva III (705 AD, GE 386) affirms that in the beginning of his reign, he carried war against the Mallas and reached the Gandaka.[46] From the following events of his reign, it appears that he could not maintain his supreme status for long as he is called **Nrpati**, while his contemporary, Shivadeva II, is called **Maharajadhiraja**.[47] Jayaswal believes that the origin of the dual sovereignty in Nepal lay in the dual constitution (Raja and Upraja) of the Lichchavis.[48] We have a reference to this aspect of the constitutional point in the **Svayambhunath inscription**.[49]

The Lichchavi restoration in Nepal was attended with all round success. The victory over Tibet enhanced the military reputation of Nepal and was of far reaching consequences. Nepal was now in apposition to weigh arms against any stronger authority and if Kalhan's **Rajatarangini** is to be relied upon, we can say that the Nepalese king inflicted a crushing defeat on the king of Kashmir. Lichchavi king, Jayadeva II, deserves full credit for this victory. This was no mean achievement for Nepal.[50] Jayadeva II had matrimonial relationship with the king of Gauda. He extended his authority at least up to the Terai area, if not the whole of north India. During his rule Nepal was closely connected with Pataliputra and Gauda. Successors of Jayadeva II ruled the valley of Nepal. We do not know as to what was the relationship between Jayadeva II and Raghavadeva, the traditional founder of the Nepal era[51], which began in 879-80 AD.

PALA DOMINATION: The Thakuri dynasty of Nepal had some sort of cultural connections with Bihar. Mahayan Buddhism was well-received in Nepal. A host of Nepali scholars came to Nalanda and Vikramsila for higher studies. The Palas of Bengal and Bihar also seem to have exercised some sort of supremacy over Nepal. According to Jayaswal, 'the Pala emperors came into conflict with a Himalayan people called the Kambojas, who broke the Pala power for a time and who actually set themselves up at Dinajpur, where one of the routes from Nepal leads down to. This eclipse of the Palas falls to be in the epoch when Nepal starts her own era in 880 AD. Under Mahipala I, the Pala empire recovered. During his rule, Buddhism in Tibet was revived by a new mission from Bihar and we take it that Nepal was not ignored. ....Rampala was the suzerain of Nepal also.'

Jayaswal's observation is based purely on a manuscript, **Kubjikamatam**, which is not free from doubts.[52] Jayaswal calls it as the 'positive proof'[53] of the Pala rule in Nepal, whereas the court poet of Rampala does not say anything definite on this point. Sylvain Levi takes a more sober view, when he says, 'It is

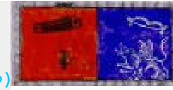


not impossible that the Pala dynasty had imposed at this time (beginning of the eleventh century AD) at least a nominal suzerainty over Nepal. This, satisfactorily, explains the presence, in the Nepalese collections, of manuscripts, copied during the reign of the Palas, specially of Mahipala and Nayapala. Religion must have made the intercourse between Nepal and Pala dominions, more intimate and frequent.'[54] Dr R C Mazumdar holds that the date on the Imadpur image inscriptions of Mahipala may be read as Newari Samvat 148 (=1028 AD) instead of 48. He further believes that the dedicator of the image was an inhabitant of Nepal and hence the Newari Samvat has been used.[55]

There are reasons to believe that there was a regular contact between Nepal and the Palas of Bengal and Bihar. The Tibetans had passed through Nepal in 1038 AD to fetch Atisha Dipankar Srijnan from the University of Vikramsila. According to Taranath, Atisha met a local ruler in the valley in 1040 AD.[56] Atisha is credited with having introduced novel feature in Mahayana form of Buddhism. The tantric form of Mahayana in Nepal probably dates from his visit. Nepal was the main channel through which the Pala kings propagated their Vajrayana doctrines.[57] This cultural contact, since the beginning of the Pala rule, might have envisaged some sort of loose political relationship between the two powers. The Colophon of the Tantric Ramayana manuscript, **Kubjimatam**, reads, '**Parmeswara Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Srimad Rampaldevasya Vijayrajye**'. If this colophon be taken as the 'positive proof' of the Pala rule, we can say that Rampala (1084-1130 AD) ruled over Nepal. No other source is there to support this contention. It is true that in the eleventh century, Nepal was internally divided and there was absence of any strong central authority. The three important feudal principalities of Nepal were : Patan, Khatmandu and Bhatagaon. Hence the possibility of an extension of Pala rule in the area cannot be precluded in the present state of our knowledge. In no distant future the Palas were replaced by the Karnatas of Mithila.

CHALUKYA INVASION OF NEPAL: The Chalukya Emperor, Someswara I, extended his arms in north India. His son Vikramaditya VI describes himself as having placed his feet upon the heads of the kings of Andhra, Dravida, Magadha and Nepal.[58] The Pattadukal inscription of 1162 AD mentions Nepal among the vassal states of the Chalukya emperor Someswara III. It was originally conquered by Someswara and Vikramaditya VI.[59] Even Kalachuri Bijjal is praised for having destroyed the stability of Nepal in an inscription of 1200 AD.[60] The Mangali inscription represents Yadava Jaitungi (1191-1210) as having defeated the leaders of the armies of Nepal. These successive raids into the territory of Nepal, since the beginning of the 11th century AD, prove that the political condition of that country was in a fluid state. During the period under review, some sort of disturbances took place between the Thakuris of Nayakot and Patan. It is also stated that the disturbances leading to the restoration of the Thakuris of Nayakot originated in Tirhut where the Karnatas had already established their power.[61]

THE KARNATAS OF MITHILA: Taking advantage of the chaotic situation of Nepal, the Karnatas of Mithila entered the valley during the time of Nanyadeva. Thakur observes, "....The forefathers of Nanya established themselves as feudatory chiefs in Tirhut, on the borders of Nepal, as a result of the great successive raids by great Chalukya prince to the foothills of the Himalayan range ....after the withdrawal of the strong Chalukya arms. ....They rose to pre-eminence and established themselves as rulers of Tirhut."[62] The fluid political situation of Nepal enabled Nanyadeva to capture the whole of the country. He dethroned the ruling princes and established his court at Bhatagaon. If Nepalese tradition is to be

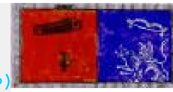


relied upon, Nanyadeva captured two Nepalese princes, viz., Jagadevamalla of Patan and Khatmandu and Anandamalla of Bhatagaon. According to Levi, the chroniclers have fallen into a blunder by introducing the Malla kings into Nepal at this period.[63] The Mallas of Nepal traced their descent to Nanyadeva.[64] Another view is that he did not destroy the local princes in the Nepal valley who continued to rule under the hegemony of the Karnatas of Tirhut.

Perhaps the Karnatas replaced the Palas in Nepal. Bendall has omitted Nanyadeva, while Wright and Bhagwanlal push him to a later date.[65] There is absolutely no ground for any doubt that Nanyadeva made himself the master of the entire valley. D W Wright refers to a conflict between the Mallas of Nepal and Nanyadeva. Nanyadeva did not have a peaceful time in Nepal and he had to face the opposition of a Thakuri prince, Sihadeva, who adopted a high sounding title as 'Rajadhiraj Parmeswara'. Nanya's invasion of Nepal took place between 1119 and 1120 AD. The local ruling princes continued to assume imperial title, inspite of their subservient position.[66] Mr Regmi thinks that Nanyadeva occupied the Nepal valley for the second time in 1141 AD. Between 1118 and 1141 AD there might have arisen some difficulties for Nanya in Nepal which called for him immediate attention and hence a re-conquest of the valley in 1141. The apparent nature of his sovereignty is not clear.

The very fact that Nanya re-conquered the territory of Nepal in 1141 AD, is evident to show that his rule there continued unabated till 1147 AD. Whether his successors continued to rule or not, we do not know in definite terms. There is a tradition in Mithila that one of Nanya's sons ruled in Nepal.[67] As Gangadeva ruled in Mithila, it appears that Malladeva ruled in Nepal. We are further told that Narasimhadeva, the third Karnata ruler of Mithila, had some differences with his kinsmen in Nepal, the upshot of which was that Mithila and Nepal were separated. The possibility of invasion of Nanya's kingdom cannot be dismissed outright. Probably Malladeva ruled over Nepal and eastern portion of Tirhut, and he was not on good terms with his brother Gangadeva. Probably during the time of Narasimhadeva (1188-1227 AD), the kingdom of Nepal became separate.[68] The authority of the Karnatas might have been loose in Nepal after Nanya. From the five manuscripts[69], it appears that the Thakuri king threw off the yoke of the Karnata domination in Nepal. Manuscript is the only source for Nepal history during the period. The local chiefs might have established their independence after Nanya, but there is little doubt that they acknowledged the suzerainty of the successors of Nanyadeva.

THE MALLAS: Before going into the further details of the Karnatas we should pause here to discuss the history of the Mallas in Nepal who appear on the scene of history. The Mallas were an important people since the days of the Buddha. After the Mauryan Empire, they shifted to the hilly regions along the banks of the river Gandaka. The chronicle speaks of a Malla family ruling in Tirhut before and after Nanyadeva. Levi considers the existence of such a dynasty in Tirhut not wholly impossible.[70] Taking advantage of the unstable political condition of Nepal, they entered into the valley and made themselves the master of the territory. The new dynasty of the Mallas came to power with Aridevamalla who began a new line.[71] We learn from the **Nilgriva pillar inscription** that Dharmamalla and Rupamalla were the ancestors of the Mallas of Nepal.[72] The most important ruler of this dynasty was Arimalladeva, whose known dates range from 1201 to 1216 AD. He is not known to have ruled in Mithila and most probably belonged to a local Malla dynasty of Nepal.[73]



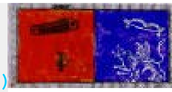
THE KARNATA RESTORATION: While the Mallas were ruling in Nepal, there was some sort of invasion against Nepal led by a minister of Mithila. Chandeswara boasts in his **Danaratnakara** that he was victorious over all the kings of Nepal.[74] The political condition of Nepal during the first quarter of the 14th century was in a state of flux. The episode of the Nepal conquest by Chadeswara is found in his **Krtyaratnakara** and he is said to have performed a sacrificial ceremony on the bank of the river Bagmati.[75] Harasimhadeva's authority in Nepal seems to have been shaken by the repeated Muslim incursions and the stiff resistance put up by the Mallas. This invasion of Nepal from the South which took place in 1314 AD, is preserved in the Nepalese chronicle. Harisimhadeva could not become the sole ruler of Nepal before 1324 AD, as we find that, in a **MSS** of 1318 AD, a Thakuri prince was ruling there.

Inspite of his willingness to strengthen his authority in Nepal, Harasimhadeva could not do it in 1314 AD because of the presence of external danger. The pressure of the Tughlaq arms on Tirhut compelled him to make a fresh bid for power in Nepal. When he was defeated by the Tughlaq army (1324-26 AD), he retired to the hills and devoted his energy solely to consolidate his position.[76] The reigning king of Nepal was Jayarudramalla who submitted without any resistance. Harisimhadeva is said to have founded a line of Suryavamsi dynasty at Bhatagaon.[77] He consolidated his position in Nepal and thereby re-asserted the Karnata supremacy. He ruled for a longer period at Bhatagaon, where the temple of Tuljadevi is attributed to him.[78] He received a number of scholars from Mithila. The invasion of Harisimhadeva eclipsed the Thakuri power for the interval. In the Nepalese chronicle of Jayasthiti's time, his invasion is not noted probably because the contemporary chroniclers regarded him as a foreigner. The fact, that his successors ruled till 1765 directly or indirectly, is confirmed by various sources. His sovereignty in Nepal is evident from an inscription.[79] Besides the well attested invasion of Harisimhadeva, several other foreign powers made themselves felt at this time and one of them was the invasion of Adityamalla from western Nepal.[80] 'Tirhutiya Jagatsimha' is said to have enjoyed special sovereignty for a few days.[81]

Harisimhadeva's family had a continuous rule in Nepal.[82] According to Wright, the successors of Harisimhadeva were : (a) Matisimha (ruled for 15 years); (b) Saktisimha (who abdicated the throne 22, 27 or 33 years in favour of his son); and (c) Syamasimhadeva (he had no male issue. His daughter was married to a prince of the Malla dynasty.)

We learn that the Chinese Emperor, Hang-Wu, sent two emissaries to the king of Nepal whose name was Ma-ta-na (Matisimha).[83] The Chinese envoy brought an official seal, confirming Matisimha in his kingly office. In return, the Nepalese king sent to Peking a gift containing gold shrine and sacred books. Saktisimha received a letter from the Emperor of China with a seal bearing the inscriptions '**Saktisimharama**' in the Chinese year 535.[84] The exchange of mission between China and Nepal took place in 1330, 1399, 1414 and 1418 and so on. Syamasimha received a seal confirming his accession. From these facts, it is evident that the Chinese Emperor regarded these Karnata rulers as the legal sovereigns of Nepal.

A coup d' etat was staged by Jayasthitimalla in the reign of Jayarjuna, the husband of Rajjalladevi. Jayasthiti is said to be a descendant of Harisimhadeva of Simaraon.[85] He married with Rajjalladevi (daughter of Nayakdevi and Jagatasimha). Bendall holds that Jayasthiti defeated Jayarjuna and became the king of Nepal. He claimed to be the legitimate representative of the Mallas and the Suryavamsi



Karnatas. His descendants continued to rule the country till they were displaced by Prthivi Narayana, or the Gorkha conquest of Nepal.[86] By the marriage of Rajjalladevi with Jayasthitimalla, the three warring houses of rulers, the Thakuris, the Karnatas, and the Mallas were united together in a common bond.[87]

Jayasthitimalla was a very powerful ruler. He was succeeded by Yaksamalla, who extended his authority in Tirhut. He crushed out his rivals in the valley and divided his kingdom into four parts:

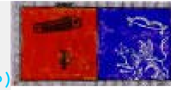
a. Bhatagaon – to his oldest son Rajyamalla.
b. Banepa – to Ranmalla.
c. Khatmandu – to Ratnamalla.
d. Patan – to his daughter.[88]

This fatal mistake ultimately led to the ruin of Nepal. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Nepal was divided into a number of petty feudal principalities.[89] Far east of the valley, there was a Kirata state comprising the basins of the river Dudhakosi and its tributaries and a portion of the Terai east of river Sunkosi.

MUSLIM INVASION: Let us now revert back to the 14th century AD again to catch the thread of historical continuity. Even after the conquest of Nepal by the Karnatas, there existed various local dynasties enjoying sovereign status. About 1346-47 AD, the kingdom of Nepal was divided into a number of petty principalities. The successors of Harisimhadeva were ruling at Bhatagaon, while those of the Thakuri dynasty were ruling at Khatmandu. There is no doubt to question their independent status. Haji Ilyas of Bengal invaded Nepal in 1326 AD by way of Purnea. In all **Vamsavalis** except that of Bendall, this account of Muslim invasion does not find mention. The **Svayambhunath inscription** is explicit on this point.[90] According to that inscription, Haji Ilyas besieged Khatmandu, burnt and plundered the town and demolished the images. The inscription is dated NS 492 (=1371-72 AD). It was set up to celebrate the restoration ceremony of the Stupa, severely damaged by Surtrana Samasdin of Bengal in November-December, 1346 AD.

JAYASTHITIMALLA AND AFTER: We have seen above that the three warring houses were united together in a common bond in the 14th century. The Karnatas were ruling from Bhatagaon.[91] We learn from the Patan inscription of 1413 that the sons of Jayasthitimalla were partners with the Karnatas at Bhatagaon. Jayasthitimalla strengthened his position and gave stability to Nepal. He was succeeded by Jagajyotirmalla, followed by Jyotirmalla and the latter by Yaksamalla (1427-1470 AD). Yaksamalla extended his authority into the plains. He was the most powerful monarch of his time and after his death, Nepal was again divided into a number of smaller principalities. Yaksamalla's third son, Ratnamalla, was under the influence of Maithila Brahmanas. Ratnamalla was followed by Amarmalla and the latter by Mahendramalla. He brought into use the silver coins. He received silver from Tirhut.[92]

LATER CONNECTIONS: The connection between Tirhut and Nepal did not cease in the later years. We learn that Raja Mahinath Thakur of Darbhanga was once engaged in a fight against Raja Gajasimha of Simaraon and is also said to have put down the inhabitants of Morang.[93] Makmani (Makwanpur) occupied the region between the Terai and sub-Himalayan tracts of the valley just south and south-west. Raja Harihar was one of the prominent rulers of this area in the 17th-18th century. Raja



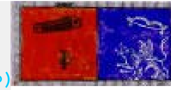
Raghavasimha of Darbhanga fought a battle against Raja Bhupasimha of Panchmahala in the Nepal Terai. Bhupasimha was killed.[94] In the 17th century there lived an eminent Maithila pandita in Nepal, named Vamsamani.[95] Murari Misra served under Raja Tribikrama Narayana of Morang.[96] Pandita Dinabandhu Jha served under the Raja of Nepal in 1754. He got some jagir there from the Nepal Darbar. It was in the 18th century that the Banjaras also took refuge in the Terai area and Alivardi had to take necessary measures against them. The Banjaras had gone up to the limits of Makwanpur.[97]

THE GORKHAS OF NEPAL: When the English East India Company was stabilising in Bengal and Bihar, the Gorkhas rose to power in Nepal valley in 1765 AD under Raja Prthvi Narayana. The new power, founded in the Himalayan region by Gorkhas was a factor to be reckoned with. The only serious effort to check their progress was made by Mirkasim, the Nawab of Bengal in 1762. His army was seriously defeated under the wall of Makwanpur.[98] Mir Kasim's aim was ambitious and imperialistic. His failure enabled the Gorkhas to strengthen themselves, and they finally conquered the Nepal valley in 1768 AD.

NEPAL AND THE ENGLISH: Various attempts were made by the Nawab of Bengal and the authorities of the East India Company to establish trade relationship with Nepal but all to no purpose. In 1802 AD, some deputies from Nepal came to Patna to meet the representatives of the English East India Company. The event took place after the conclusion of a commercial treaty between the English and Nepal in 1800, when Wellesly was the Governor-General of India. The visit of the Nepal deputies did not produce any tangible effect and the British resident Captain Knox was recalled.[99] The dispute between the EIC and Nepal had begun with the rise of the Gorkha power. According to Thornton, the conduct of the Nepali government compelled the Governor-General in Council to declare the treaty dissolved in the administration of Marquis Wellesly.[100]

The trouble did not cease immediately. In 1814, the Gorkha frontier was co-terminus with that of the British over a distance of seven hundred miles.[101] The war that followed was fought in north Bihar. The British defeat encouraged the Peshwas. In Saran, some serious disturbances had taken place. A Nepali Subadar seized, plundered and burnt some villages, while an enquiry was pending. The Nepalese took possession of the remaining villages of the Tappa and the total number thus seized being twenty-two. Colonel Bradshaw was asked to proceed to Saran.[102] Lord Minto addressed a letter to the Raja of Nepal. The reply of that communication was unsatisfactory and hence Bradshaw proceeded to execute the orders.[103] Necessary arrangements were made for the re-occupation of the Terai area and captain Barrer Letter was deputed for the defence of the British frontier from the river Kosi eastward.[104]

There was no other alternative but to take recourse to war. A particular division of the army marched through Makwani direct upon the Nepalese capital. The Governor-General had fixed his strongest hopes in the Campaign. Edward Roughsedge moved forward with his detachment to occupy the Terai or Tirhut, while Bradshaw proceeded to occupy a position at Barharwa, then under the possession of Parasuram Thapa, the Nepalese Subadar of Terai. Thapa fled to Karrarbanna Garhi. He was chased across the Bagmati and killed on the 25th November, 1814. The Terai of Saran was secured. Roughsedge occupied the Terai of Tirhut without opposition. Another engagement took place at Parsaon on the 6th January, 1815. General Marbey was placed at Bettia to cover the depot. Negotiations for peace were carried through Gajraj Misra. Evasion and duplicity marked the Nepalese diplomacy during the period of



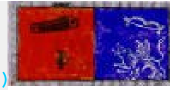
negotiation. According to the treaty, it was settled (1815) that Nepal should renounce all claims to the lands in which the authority of the British Government had been introduced. No satisfactory result came out of this treaty.[105]

The treaty did not bring in its train the end of all hostilities between the two states. On February 9, 1816, David Ochterlony advanced through the great sal forests towards the passes leading into the valley of Makwanpur. He encamped near Makwanpur. A severe conflict ensued. Colonel Kelly dispossessed the enemy of a possession on the Hariharpur hills. The march of the British army halted only after the ratification of the treaty already concluded earlier. According to Thornton, vanity was the original source of all the errors of Lord Moira (Minto) in connection with the Nepalese war.[106] On 28th of February, 1816, the Gorkhas were defeated at Makwanpur. The treaty of Sugauli was promptly ratified and a lasting peace was concluded.

FACTORS LEADING TO THE TREATY OF SUGAULI: We shall now pass on to discuss the genesis of the treaty of Sugauli. We have seen above that the early intercourse between Britain and Nepal was purely commercial and nothing else. The existence of a powerful independent kingdom on the foothills of the Himalayas was an eyesore to the British. After having established themselves in Nepal, the Gorkha rulers conquered hills of Makwanpur and claimed the cultivated lowlands on payment to the British Government of the same tribute as was paid by the Raja of Makwanpur. The claim was admitted and for thirty years Gorkhas paid tributes which was relinquished by article 7 of the treaty of 1801.[107]

As early as 1793, a mission had been sent to Nepal under Kirpatrick who returned disappointed. Captain Knox joined as the first Resident as a result of the treaty of 1801, which was dissolved in 1804. Between 1804 and 1812, the relations between Nepal and Britain were strained. In 1808, the Gorkha Governor of the Morang district seized the Zemundari of Bhimangar (Saharsa district). It was so flagrant a violation that the British Government determined on resisting it. The contest became inevitable. A British detachment was sent to the frontier with orders to resume the Zemindari at the point of the bayonet. The Gorkhas evacuated the land in 1810 but took possession of some lands on Bettia boundaries. This aggression was forcibly resisted by the people of the Bettia frontier and gave rise to the five border skirmishes with the Nepalese. Lord Hastings threatened the forcible occupation and the disputed districts were occupied in April 1814. War was declared in the month of November of the same year. That led to the treaty of Sugauli on November 28, 1814. Article 3 of the treaty refers to the area acceded by the Government of Nepal. The ratification of the treaty was withheld by the Darbar and the result was the contest between 1814 and 1816. After its ratification, Mr Gardener was appointed as the first Resident under the terms of the Treaty of Sugauli.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND NEPAL: Tirhut played an important part in the history of Indo-Nepalese relation. Tirhut was stepping stone to the conquest of Nepal. It was through Tirhut that the contact of European traders with Nepal could be established. The first recorded European penetration in Nepal was in 1715. Another attempt was made in 1745 and then in 1766. Because of the policy of precaution followed by the king of Nepal, the missionaries had no alternative but to retire to the plains. They closed down their mission in Nepal and came down to Bettia, where an important Roman Catholic centre was



opened.[108] That marked the beginning of Christian activities in this part of our land and ultimately in Nepal.

As early as 1704 AD, a party of capuchin missionaries left Rome. The missionaries belonged to the Roman Catholic sect. They entered Nepal in the first quarter of the 18th century. Father Horace, who had gone to Khatmandu, was arrested. After his release, he came down to Patna. In 1733, Father Francis died at Bhatagaon. In 1739, the king of Bhatagaon sent his invitation to the missionaries to reopen the mission in Nepal. Consequently, the two Fathers, Joeikin and Vito, went to Nepal from Patna. As at other places, these missionaries acted as advanced guards of the western culture and facilitated the opening of political relationship with the western countries. The Christian missionaries could not become so popular in Nepal as in different parts of India.

TRADE RELATIONS: Besides the political relationship trade relationship between Nepal and Mithila has existed since time immemorial. We have references to this aspect with contemporary literature and other sources. As late as the last quarter of the 18th century, export and import, to and from Nepal, were not unknown.[109] Important stations for such purposes were Birganj, Raxaul, Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Biratnagar and Purnea.

DEPREDATIONS ON THE NEPAL-MITHILA BORDER IN THE 18TH CENTURY: The unstable political situation of Bihar in the 18th century enabled those who were in search of troubled situation, to fish in the troubled waters. The Banjaras had created problems for the Nawab of Bengal and Bihar but the strong hand of Alivardi put them down. The lack of strong central authority again created fresh field for the so-called Sannyasis or the Fakeers who made depredations throughout the state and disturbed the peace. We are told that these Fakeers were protected and encouraged in their depredations by so high a power as the Raja of Morang.[110]

The Collector of Purnea wrote in 1794, "I suffered insolence from the wakeel of the Raja of Morang who bullied and frightened me. ....Khurram Shah, the chief of the one band of Fakeers, has been released, as the Raja of Nepal writes to me, he is forbidden by his faith from punishing a Fakeer, and I now hear that he is at his favourite encampment Mutteane (Makmani?), a village belonging to the Morang on the Tirhut boundary threatening to pay Raja Madhosingh a visit unless he pays a sum of money." This is confirmed by a letter to Tirhut Collector in 1795 informing him that Khurram Saw Fakeer had gathered on the borders of Tirhut with a large body of armed men with hostile intentions. The establishment of the Collector at Darbhanga in 1782 and consequently at other places brought the situation under control and the final ratification of the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816 brought to close the frequent boundary disputes. The areas were defined and law and order restored as a result of the settlement between Nepal and British Government.

CHAPTER XVI

SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN MEDIEVAL MITHILA

I

The social structure of Mithila in the middle ages was based on a feudal pattern, which provided for a landowning aristocracy on the one hand and a vast mass of dependent peasant producers on the other. The landowners constituted an extremely powerful class, of which the king was the most important. As a non-producing class, they lived on the rental, mainly in kind, collected from the peasants and on the services rendered by the rural folk. Feudal corvee (forced labour or begara) was a common feature, and the ordinary villagers were harassed and exploited. The feudal barons not only controlled the political system but also the social and economic life.

Candesvara, a lawgiver and commentator of the fourteenth century, held that ministers were to be appointed on a hereditary basis, which naturally strengthened the bonds of the feudal order. The whole social and political system was organised on a feudal basis. Various feudal titles such as **mahasamantadhipati**, **mahasamanta**, **maharaja**, **mahamandalika**, **mahamandalesvara**, **samanta**, **ranaka**, **rauta**, **thakura**, etc., are known to us from contemporary inscriptions and literature. Candesvara discusses the legal status of the feudatories and the barons. According to him, the samantas were appointed for the administration of a group of villages. We learn that a noble called Ganesvara presided over the council of the feudatory chiefs of Mithila in the fourteenth century AD and held their chief-ship. The feudal barons donated land, tanks, temples and performed the **tulapurusadana** or expensive **yajna**.

A few brahmanas such as Bhavanath Misra Ayaci took pride in poverty. The Brahmanas of Mithila, as a class, enjoyed immense power and pelf and controlled the destiny of the kingdom. Rudradhara takes note of black-marketers and profiteers, rebels and vicious persons among them. The luxury of a small group went hand in hand with the appalling poverty of the people. Both Jyotirisvara and Vidyapati bewail the growing social inequality. An ordinary person is described as nothing more than a fallen creature. Vardhamana cautions against **prakasataskaras** such as traders, manufacturers, physicians, druggists, false arbitrators and witnesses, **mantrikas** and **tantrikas**, who move freely in society in the guise of honest citizens.

II

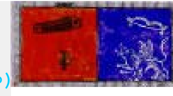
During the period under review social immobility, fragmentation and self-sufficiency characterised the caste villages, and dynastic changes hardly produced any impression upon the system. Stability

synchronized with an increasing petrifaction of the social structure. **Kulinism** emerged as a powerful force. By its insistence on the purity of lineage, it gave prominence to birth, accomplishments and character. The earliest reference to the system can be traced to the Bangaon copper plate inscription of Vigrahapala III, which is supported by the Pancobha copper plate inscription of Samgramagupta in the thirteenth century. Adisura is credited with having invited five Kolanca brahmanas to make a clean sweep of the impure practices that might have come from Buddhist Magadha. Since Mithila scholar Vacaspati Misra in his **Nyayakanika** mentions Adisura as his patron, it is believed that the king ruled somewhere in north Bihar or on the border of north Bihar and north Bengal (where he is credited with having invited five Kayasthas also). Vacaspati also mentions one Nrga, who may have been either Adisura or an independent small prince somewhere in Mithila. Vacaspati had saved Mithila from the onslaughts of the Buddhists, and Adisura had requested the Kolanca brahmanas to make rules for the protection of Brahmanism.

In medieval times the brahmanas came to be classified on the basis of territorial divisions as **Sarasvatas**, **Gaudas**, **Kanyakubjas**, **Maithilas** and **Autkalas**. The system of limiting marriage to one's own section found favour with them. In Mithila the system of organising the brahmanas on sound lines according to **gotra**, **pravara** and **sakha** is attributed to Adisura and it is thought that from his time a skeleton genealogy came to be maintained and preserved. Marriage relations could be established only within the territorial caste, but certain generations on the side of the father and mother had to be avoided. This naturally created the need for a genealogical chart of every family, known as the **panji** system. But even before the introduction of this system in Mithila every brahmana family is believed to have kept the genealogical record of his family, a fact that finds support from Kumarila. The system was further organised under the Karnatas, and the credit for placing it on more methodical lines goes to Harisimhadeva. It may be noted that Grierson highly praised the system of keeping and maintaining the genealogical records among the Brahmanas and theKarana Kayasthas of Mithila.

The **panjis** were created to guard against the possibility of marrying a girl who may not be marriageable according to the sastras. Excessive regard for the supposed purity of blood gave rise to the systematic practice of keeping genealogies and family records. In course of time the **panji** records, though one of the most extraordinary series in existence, led to many social complications. It was Harisimhadeva who finally settled the respective ranks of the different brahmana and karana kayastha families and laid down rules to govern marriages. His object was to avoid the forbidden degrees of relationship and marriages. Certain approved professions, birth, accomplishment and character decided the issue of social status. In the beginning birth was not the sole consideration; learning and conduct were given the same importance as birth. Respectability in the beginning was personal, but it tended to become hereditary. Territorial names for exogamous sections were curiously mixed with names preserving the memory of a chief who founded the section in historic times. **Kula** and **mula** express a circle of agnatic descent. Harimisra and Vacaspati Misra emphasised the importance of **kuladharma** and **mula**. Like the brahmanas, the karana kayasthas also came to have their own **panjis**.

The social hierarchy with all its carefully regulated marks of honour apportioned to each family prevails even today, both among the brahmanas and karana kayasthas, and is strictly followed by the conservative sections. Since the brahmanas and karana kayasthas of Mithila follow the **panji** strictly,

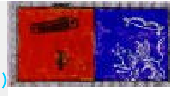


they are regarded as Maithilas in spite of the fact that the structure of Maithila society has undergone great changes in recent years. Though it is not possible to fit in exactly the karana kayasthas (or kayasthas in general) in the traditional four-varna system, they occupied important positions in the affairs of the state both under the Karnatas and the Oinvaras, and they ranked fairly high, second only to the brahmanas, in social hierarchy. The term karana kayastha implied both caste and profession. Though traditional, hereditary professions held the field, sometimes changes had to be allowed; for example, brahmanas took to agriculture, and the sudras were authorised to make grants to the brahmanas.

Although Harisimhadeva determined the relative status of the brahmanas and karana kayasthas, they proliferated into numerous sub-castes. Originally they were divided into about 180 and 200 **mulas** respectively, but later these shot up to a little above one thousand **mulas**. The stock **mulas** were subdivided into various **mulagramas** and **deras**. Sometimes the **mulas** are mentioned after the name of the village or of the **dera**. The **mulas** indicate either the original homeland or the territorial unit of the **bijipurusa** (founder of the line). While preparing these records attempts were made to collect **gotra**, **sakha**, **pravara**, the earliest habitat, change, if any, thereafter, names of villages, whether the family had migrated along with the name of person who had migrated etc. The name of the earliest known habitation came to be known as **mula**. Some of the **mulas** are common to both the brahmanas and karana kayasthas.

In Mithila a person could improve his social status by establishing marital relationship with members of the higher **mulas**. Those who failed to contract marriages with the mulas of equal status for three generations came to be downgraded and reckoned as **grhasthas**. If a man of a lower **mula** maintained marital relationship with the higher **mulas** (that is, by obtaining grooms by paying a heavy amount as **vyavastha**) his social status came to be upgraded. Generally poor brahmanas of high mulas were 'purchased' as bridegrooms, and they were known as **bikauas**. In a period when birth was the decisive factor in status evaluation, the richer sections of the lower **mulas** wanted to go up by establishing marriage connections with the poor **bikauas** of the higher **mulas**. It resulted in polygamy, and sometimes a so-called **bhalamanusa** (gentleman) among the brahmanas came to have as many as 50 wives. The death of such a husband meant widowhood for a good number of women. The conservative Maithilas even today insist on the high **mulas**, and the **srotriyas** among the brahmanas and the **bhalamanusa** among the kayasthas do not like to go out of their limited circle. The price was paid both for going up and coming down. Risley describes the **bikauas** as a class of vendors who emerged in Mithila as a result of this system.

The introduction of the **panji** system led to the development of two functional classes, the **panjikaras** and the **ghatakas**. The work of the compilation of the family trees was entrusted to a class of scholarly **panjikaras**. The panjikaras preserved them and went on making them up-to-date. Raghudeva Jha and Suryakara Thakura are credited with having compiled the genealogies of the brahmanas and kayasthas respectively during the time of Harisimhadeva. The system was followed with strict accuracy, and **samula** marriage was strictly prohibited. The main duty of the panjikaras was to issue the **asvajanapatra** (certificate of non-relationship) to the parties contracting marriage at the time of **siddhanta** or the finalisation of negotiations. The system of **siddhanta** is still in vogue in Mithila among the brahmanas and kayasthas. So strong is the old tradition that the social hierarchy with its carefully regulated marks



of honour prevails even today among these two communities. The **panji** prohibits marriage with the girls of the following kinds:

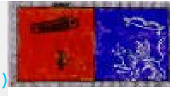
i. **Sagotra** – the girl of the same gotra;
ii. **Sapinda** – within the seventh direct descent either from the paternal or maternal side;
iii. In any case, the bride should not be related up to the seventh generation in descent from the father's side and up to the fifth from the mother's side;
iv. Issue of grandfather – both maternal and paternal; and
v. Daughter of the brother of the stepmother.

Since all the Karana Kayasthas belong to only one gotra, Kasyapa, they are allowed to have **sagotra** marriage but not **samula** marriage. It appears that the **Kasyapa** gotra was thrust upon them later.

The system of kulinism strongly affected the Maithila society. It encouraged excessive orthodoxy and empty formalism. Invidious social distinctions were perpetuated. Taking of cooked food outside the caste was interdicted, and the pursuit of hereditary profession was made mandatory. Kulinism killed the initiative of a large mass of people, whose interest now lay not in society as a whole but in their own particular segment. The newly created kulinas among the two communities prided themselves on their purity of blood and derided all those who ranked below them in social hierarchy. It helped the growth of a false sense of vanity. Like all traditional thinkers, Vidyapati believed in the maintenance of the social status quo, and he advised persons to stick to their own vocations. Purely scriptural arguments were put forward in support of social inequality. The brahmanas ramified into numerous categories on the basis of **gotra**, **sakha** and **pravara**. Candesvara quoted a passage from Devala regarding the eight grades of brahmanas, indicating thereby eight sub-castes. People of different gotras and pravaras claiming descent from some distant **rsi** or sage ancestors became endogamous castes. In Mithila the brahmanas were divided into **srotriyas, yogyas**, **panjiprabandhas** and **jaibaras**. Ranks were settled for each one of them, and marriage rules were accordingly fixed. Whatever flexibility early kulinism had, it disappeared gradually. Kulinism held a wider appeal for the upper caste people in the beginning and also left some scope for the improvisation of the status of the lower caste people. It seems that from Mithila it spread to Bengal and Assam. The Bengali **kulapanjika** texts are indebted to the rules prescribed by Harimisra and Vacaspatimisra, and the kayasthas of Assam borrowed the institution of kulinism from Mithila.

III

A distinctive feature of the social structure of medieval Mithila was the existence of numerous castes and sub-castes. The medieval Maithila **nibandhakaras** (law commentators) emphasised the necessity of maintaining the old social order based on the **varnasrama** system, which, according to Vidyapati, meant the observance of the respective duties of various castes. The inevitability of the caste was the common bond that helped the formation of a coherent society, and the class structure was maintained by the association of the nobles with armed retainers. It was ordained that everybody should earn his livelihood according to his caste. The violation of caste rules involved social ostracism. An indefinite number of despised castes were brought under the traditional framework of four varnas. The **nibandhakaras** believed that the traditional social system guaranteed social stability. A country where



caste rules are not observed is described as a **mlechcha** country in the **Visnu Purana**, and Vidyapati repeats it in one of his writings.

On the ideological plane, the Brahmanas kept alive the orthodox tradition of caste. They compiled the **smritis** containing rules regarding the social practices of the varnas, their food, dress, marriage, inheritance, purification rites and ceremonies from birth to death. The officers of the state tried to enforce caste rules and religious taboos in strict conformity with the holy scriptures. In the thirteenth century, Ramasimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty appointed an officer in each village to adjudicate upon all questions arising from the working of the canons of conduct. Though orthodox and conservative in socio-religious matters, Ramasimhadeva possessed a liberal outlook, as can be inferred from his offer of the office of the chief priest to a visiting Tibetan Buddhist traveller, Dharmasvami. However, the latter thankfully declined the honour, for he had to return to Tibet. In Mithila all traces of Buddhism were destroyed by the Brahmanas in collusion with the rulers and all kinds of rigid practices were encouraged. Even journey outside the territorial limits of Mithila was forbidden except in the case of those who went on pilgrimage to Gaya. Going southwards across the Ganga needed fresh initiation. Any violation of the traditional social order and rules was a source of anxiety to the orthodox thinkers, and Vidyapati bewails the declining moral standards of the people.

In Mithila the Brahmanas were the most powerful feudal barons enjoying special prerogatives. They were powerful members of the government, and as landowning aristocracy they wielded substantial political and economic power from the highest to the lowest level. They received as well as made land grants. The game of war and politics was a preserve of the well-born aristocrats. By the time of Candesvara, the Brahmanas had come to act as rulers, ministers, commanders, officers of state, and had even taken to trade and agriculture. They enjoyed immunity from murder and mutilation, and were given the option to pay their fines in instalments. For about two hundred years they had usurped all power and become extremely powerful. Candasvara prescribed royal consultations with the Brahmanas before taking any decision. In conformity with the views of Laksmidhara, he conceded that no sin was incurred by tilling the land if the Brahmana agriculturists paid one-sixth of the produce as tax to the king, one-twentieth to the gods and one-thirtieth to the Brahmanas. The emergence of the Brahmanas as cultivating classes implied the introduction of an important social and economic element in the countryside. From the mode of payment to the various categories of village officers, prescribed by Candesvara, it appears that there was much of feudal element in medieval Mithila. We learn from the **Prakritapaingalam** that Haribrahma was a protégé of Candesvara. The colophons of numerous unpublished manuscripts in Mithila preserve many names of such persons. Even an ordinary Brahamana minister used high-sounding titles, which was the case with almost all the feudal nobles.

IV

The ksatriyas had lost in prominence, as the political power had been usurped by the Brahmanas. The Rajputs designated themselves as ksatriyas. Jyotirisvara gives a long list of 72 ksatriya-Rajput clans and Vidyapati mentions the Candellas and Cauhanas. Generally speaking, all rulers in the past were treated as ksatriyas and classed as such, but the situation changed considerably when the Brahmanas themselves became rulers. It is held by some that the ksatriyas also had their **panjis**, but we have not

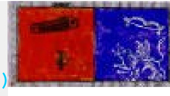
come across any one so far. Risley noticed the **panjis** of the vaisyas in the nineteenth century but could not trace any family tree of the kastriyas. One wonders whether Harisimhadeva, described as pamaraksatriya by the Rajputs of Mithila, who came to be noted for their bravery, did make provision for the maintenance of the **panji** among his own kinsmen. Even those who claim descent from Harisimhadeva do not have any such **panji** today, and there is a lot of confusion in the genealogical table of Gandhwariya Rajputs of Mithila. It appears that other castes did not take as much interest in the **panjis** as did the Brahmanas and the kayasthas.

With the passage of time and change in the political set up, we notice some modification in the respective duties of the castes. The traditional theory relating to the professions was not strictly adhered to. Different castes had by then adopted different professions; for example, the Brahmanas had, besides practising agriculture and trade, also taken to cooking, and the status of the sudras had also changed. According to Candesvara, a Brahmana could eat the food of a good sudras for gaining cows, land, etc. Both Laksmidhara and Candesvara advise that the sudras commit no sin if they give rice to a Brahmana for getting it cooked at the latter's house.

As a secular caste, the karana kayastha in general had to put up with the rulers. The mention of **Karanadhyaksa** by Jyotirisvara suggests that there was an organisation of the Karanas in medieval Mithila presided over by an officer of the above designation. The karanas played a prominent part in the social polity. They combined administrative duties with those of a scribe. They were important men of letters, and according to Vidyapati, they also took to teaching. The karanas and the kayasthas in Mithila were synonymous, and they came to be known as karana kayasthas. In Assam, Bengal and Orissa, they are still known as karanas. A **sasanika** karana kayastha of Ara (fifteenth century AD) named Jayaramadatta wrote the **Kalacakratantra**, the manuscript of which is preserved in the Cambridge University Library. The term **sasanika** applied to the karana kayastha indicates that he used to draft royal charters. Those who acted as scribe used to charge usual fees from the parties concerned, as is evident from the **Likhanavali**. Various contemporary sources mention the names of the distinguished karana kayastha officials, literary persons, saints and soldiers. They refer to a ruler such as Sridharadasa (author of the **Saduktikarnamrita** and composer of the **Andhratharhi inscription**), Ratnadeva, Suryakara (who helped Harisimha in the compilation of the kayastha panji), Bodhidasa (a saintly man), Amrtakara and Amiyamkara (literary persons and poets mentioned by Vidyapati), Rauta Rajadeva, Gopal Mallick, Kesava Majumdar (as is known to us from the panji) and others. Vidyapati preserves the names of many of his contemporaries. In the **Kirtilata** he mentions Ananda Khan, one of the ancestors of the Cakawaras (landed Bhumihars spread over 'twelve villages' in Begusarai district. It was in the court of Dronawara Puraditya that he wrote his **Likhanavali** and copied the manuscript of the **Bhagavata**, which is still preserved in the Raj Library, Darbhanga. Several contemporary figures are also mentioned in the **Kirtipataka**.

V

Jyotirisvara refers to the traditional two categories in the lowest rung of social order, namely, **aniravasita** (the non-excluded) and the **niravasita** (the excluded). The latter were outside the pale of Hindu society, and are equated with the **mandajatiyas**. Jyotirisvara's picture of the social classes is an

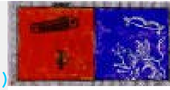


index of contemporary Mithila. The economic lot of the common man was far from satisfactory. Thatched houses, earthen cooking vessels and a broken bedstead were the only valuable possessions of a poor man. The village was nothing more than an aggregate or a cluster of dilapidated thatched houses. Rains brought miseries to an ordinary peasant or a poor man who had to take shelter under a tree. Ordinary people did not enjoy any security. The vast majority of people were condemned to a life of toil, privation and humiliation. The unprivileged masses hardly participated either in the governmental functions or in the control of production. Artisans, peasants and small merchants were attached to their respective villages even when their masters changed hands. Fiscal divisions were known as **parganas, tappas** and **gramas**.

Village as the unit of economic organisation aimed at the co-ordination of specialised functions. Production was meant for local consumption. Land was the mainstay of economic life, and agriculture was the chief occupation of a large number of people. With the exception of a few craftsmen and servants, all were engaged in agricultural production. Besides agriculturists, **chamars, sonars, lohars, jolaha, tanti, tamouli**, and persons belonging to various other crafts and professions formed part of the socio-economic life of the village. Professions had become more and more rigid and hereditary. Though the **karmakaras** could not be asked to perform any ignoble or impure job, a majority of the professional castes were treated as persons belonging to low and despised groups. Urban artisans hardly differed from rural craftsmen. They had no say either in the management or in the method of production. Manufacturers of caps, rope, pottery, drums, instruments, crude arms and agricultural implements, leather workers, weavers, and others belonged to this category. While the peasants and artisans were condemned to a life of poverty, the landed aristocracy, officials and merchants monopolised a major portion of material wealth.

The vaisyas consisted of merchants, craftsmen, cattle-breeders, cultivators, money-lenders, etc. During the period under review, most of them had been reduced to the status of sudras, as the latter too had taken to agriculture. Unscrupulous money-lenders took advantage of the ignorant debtors. It appears from the **Likhanavali** that money-lending was an extensive practice. Vidyapati's description of the cunning baniyas indicates the exploitation practised by them. Grain and money could be had on interest from rich peasants and money-lenders. Loans were generally incurred on the occasion of social functions. When the money-lenders had no faith in the loan-seeker, they insisted on security. In almost every village, there were merchants, perfume dealers, conch-shell dealers, woodcutters, blacksmiths, oil-dealers, sweetmeat-makers and others. The villagers, though divided on caste lines, had to work together on many occasions. Tillers of various castes including the sudras were encouraged to cultivate barren land on liberal terms. After the land was made cultivable they had to pay one-eighth to the **svamin** for seven years, after which the latter made alternative arrangements. The tillers were thus debarred from the benefits accruing in the long term.

Those who could not be fully absorbed in Hindu society because of their being very backward were pushed to the position of untouchables. The attitude towards the lower orders differed from person to person and from age to age. Signs of liberalism towards the sudras are discernible in Medhatithi and Visvarupa. Contrary to the rules of Baudhayana and Manu, Candesvara states that even if the parents become outcasts, they are to be obeyed and served. The appellation sudra came to include a large



number of groups of lower orders, and some of them were the most despised and exploited. It is very difficult to draw a line of distinction between the touchables and the untouchables among the sudras. Among the **mandajatiyas**, Jyotirisvara includes **telis, tanti, tivara, turia, tuluka, dhangala, dhanuka, hadi, gontha, chamar, goara, oda, sundi, vinda, kadava, nagara, doma** etc. **Domas, nisadas,** and **kapalikas** are described as untouchables in the Buddhist **Caryapadas**. Among the backward classes Vidyapati mentions **gondhi, sahani** and **dhivara**. He also mentions **hattopajivi** and **ghattopanjivi**. The sudras came to have the largest number of castes. We have in Manu about 61 mixed castes whereas in the **Brahmavaivarta Purana** the number shot up to one hundred. There are references to **64 jatis** in **Vaijayanti**. Opinions on the status of the sudras varied from author to author, and whereas Candesvara adopts a liberal attitude, Vacaspati Misra adopts a rigid position. Vidyapati includes the **kaivartas** and **dhivaras** in the list of lower castes. Jyotirisvara speaks of a number of criminal tribes and professional vagabonds. The criminal classes formed the lowest rung of the social and cultural ladder.

The depressed and backward classes had no say in social matters. The sudras and untouchables were the worse-affected. The laws were not favourable to them. If a Brahmana reduced a sudra to slavery, the former was exempt from punishment. According to Vacaspati, it was meant simply to depreciate the condition of a sudra. Harlots, professional dancers, musicians and actors were included in the lower social order, and they were despised and looked down upon as degraded castes in society. The Maithila **nibandhakaras** laid a great stress on the duties of every man as a member of the particular caste or class to which he belonged. People stood divided within a narrow caste circle. The duties of a ksatriya, a vaisya and a sudra are enumerated in the **Grhatha-ratnakara** of Candesvara. The sudras are treated as non-entities and were severely punished even for minor offences. They were expected to serve the Brahmanas.

VI

Slavery seems to have been one of the recognised social institutions in medieval Mithila though it was not of the western type. Slaves had nothing of their own, and they were completely under their masters. The **Viramitrodaya** draws a line of distinction between a slave and a servant in the following words:

"*When the man surrenders himself absolutely and entirely to the service of his master, he is a slave; when he simply undertakes to serve the master without surrendering himself, he is a servant.*"

A study of the **Likhanavali** reveals to us the pitiable condition of the lower orders. It was their dire poverty which bound them to their masters as the avenues of employment were few. An index of slavery being a developed institution in the middle ages, is provided by the existence of a separate muster-master (**majmualdaur=majumdar**) of slaves, and a separate treasury for their allowances. In Mithila a karana kayastha named Kesava Majumdar, who is mentioned in the kayastha panji, held this office, and after the fall of the Oinvaras usurped power for years.

From the contemporary literary sources, it is evident that slaves, serfs and sudras were almost synonymous, and there was a regular trade of sudras and slaves. People invested money in the purchase of sudras; the whole family was purchased and the deal was certified by witnesses. These sudras acted

as dasas or slaves or servants. Vidyapati in his **Kirtilata** and **Likhanavali** refers to the sale and purchase of slaves. Various persons were reduced to slavery for crimes and debts. Misru Misra and Vacaspati Misra refer to four classes of slaves; born or hereditary, purchased (during the famines), acquired (during the war) and inherited from ancestors. There were also others who agreed to become slaves for the sake of food and maintenance. Even after being freed from slavery people continued to be slaves for their livelihood. Sudras were also pledged to their masters, and along with slaves and serfs they were known as **vahiyas**. There are references to the outraging of modesty and unnatural offences in connection with members of the lower orders. The slaves were treated as the personal property of the master, who exploited them for domestic comforts; they had nothing to do with producing activities. They were found in chains even for nominal offences. Members of the lower orders sold themselves to those of the upper classes, and they had to serve for life according to the terms agreed upon at the time of pledging. However, food was guaranteed to them by their masters.

At times the question of the actual ownership of slaves led to title suits. We know of one such case having been actually considered by the law court of Mithila, and we have a copy of the judgement delivered by Justice Sacal Misra. This lawsuit relating to the ownership of the slave was tried as late as Saka 1716 (=1794 AD), which shows how deep-rooted the system was. In support of his judgement, Sacal Misra has quoted from Misru Misra and Harinatha Upadhyaya. We have three other documents dated Saka 1537 (=1615 AD), L Sam 528 (=1647 AD) and L Sam 549 (=1668 AD) pertaining to the sale of slaves. From the first document, we learn that a slave could be freed on payment of the price at which he was purchased. The two other documents show that the slave girls were treated as virgins at the time of transfer. These girls were let off for marriage on payment of a particular sum to the master. Apararka holds that a slave girl becomes free if she is married to a master or if she has some sexual connections with him; in the latter case she is married to him. At times the slave girls were married to the slaves of their masters. **Vahiyas** came under the same category. Since they had no property of their own, they were exempted from fines. But they had to serve the interests of their masters, who did not hesitate to use their wives as objects of lust. A slave had no social standing. Candesvara, Misru Misra, Vacaspati and others state that a master begetting a son on his female slave shall release them both provided the master has no other son.

The lower orders constituted the majority in society and were collectively called sudras. The **Vivadacintamani** contains a chapter relating to labourers, servants and slaves. The sweeping of the gateway, of the privy, of the road, of the dumping ground, shampooing the secret parts of body, removing food leavings and ordure, rubbing of the master’s limb, etc., were considered low work, and these were to be done by the slaves. The under-mentioned duties had to be performed by the lower orders:

i. Tilling of land;
ii. Cleaning utensils and sweeping the quarters;
iii. Bringing water;
iv. Carrying palanquin; and
v. Doing such work as was assigned by the master.

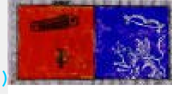
The unspeakable dire poverty of the common people forced them to be bound to their masters for life and do all sorts of odd jobs. According to Vidyapati, the chief possession of a poor man (caste notwithstanding) was his misery. Forced by circumstances and pressure of poverty, the lower classes took recourse to bad means of living, as a result of which they were described as criminal classes by Jyotirisvara. Castes and sects were advised to follow the traditional path of unquestioned obedience, as that attitude alone was considered righteous. Economic inequality led to the establishment of a resigned social attitude, which killed the initiative of a large mass of workers. Persons of means were advised to shun the company of the poor who were branded as devoid of wisdom. The idea of dharma was propagated to promote contentment among the people, whose initiative was not allowed to take shape. The social scheme envisaged the unconditional acceptance of the path of dharma which in turn meant the performance of prescribed duties by the respective castes. People were asked to suffer the present evil in the hope of future gain, and the institution of caste held out such hopes.

The poor and unsophisticated were described as **gamara** (or rustics). We have an example of the distinction in both Jyotirisvara and Vidyapati. A village was called **gama** and a city **nagara**. Rustics were known as **kugama** and **gamara**, and the townspeople were known as **nagara** but it is not clear whether this term included the people of lower orders living in towns. The villagers lacked the sophistication of town dwellers. On seeing a woman the rustics played tricks like jumping across the well, ascending tree-tops, overturning bullock carts, and singing in a low voice. Bribery, corruption and illegal gratification were not unknown to the townspeople. The common man, no matter to whatever caste he belonged and wherever he lived, had to pass through various economic odds. All the opponents of the orthodox social system were declared heretics. The distinction between the upper and lower classes was so marked that even beauty was considered to be the chief preserve of the rich and the honoured caste, and Vidyapati testifies to it in the **Purusapariksa** (tale no. 6).

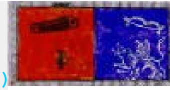
VII

Caste considerations influenced the administration of law and justice. A lower caste was to be punished for offending a Brahmana, who enjoyed special privileges. The assistance to the **vrsalas** (identified as sudras) is ruled out in the investigation of lawsuits. Members of the lower social orders suffered from obvious legal difficulties in relation to members of the higher orders. In medieval Mithila a large number of cases arose out of the sale, purchase and possession of **Vahiyas**, slaves and serfs, and in all such cases, slaves and serfs felt helpless. However, Vardhamana, a law commentator, recognised the importance of artisans and other producing classes. He recommended that artisans and craftsmen should not be deprived of their tools. He also advised punishment for black-marketers and profiteers, and cautioned people against the cheats (**prakasataskaras**), but we do not know whether these recommendations were observed.

On the whole, medieval Mithila does not present a happy society. On the one hand, we notice all the evils of the luxurious courts, and on the other the outcry of shocking poverty. The contemporary literature is replete with references to the pitiable condition of the common man and the lower orders. It refers to forced labour known as **begara**. We notice a general social and economic degradation of



persons belonging to the lower orders. The **nibandhakaras** looked upon the traditional social system as the only guarantee for social stability. The nobles in alliance with the soldiery took advantage of the situation and exploited the common man. Though new caste rules and alignments are discernible, they were meant to sustain the existing social framework in its essentials. Violation of caste rules involved social ostracism, and a casteless person became homeless and hearth-less. He had to face economic hardship, which also befell the lot of the lower caste people. Vidyapati realised the evils of poverty and advised the king to wage war against it, but his advice went unheeded.



CHAPTER XVII

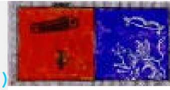
THE LOWER ORDERS IN MITHILA

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUDRAS AND SLAVES

Though the Varnasrama structure continued to dominate the scene, a set of professional classes with questionable genealogies formed various social groups. Even the Brahmanas neglected their prescribed duties. Keeping in view the declining standard of prescribed morality, the Maithila Smritikaras prescribed rules and regulations for each caste and tried to revive ancient customs and manners. Jyotirisvara mentions a long list of lower orders and tribal castes, viz., **Koch, Kirat, Kol, Bhil, Khas, Sabar, Mlechcha, Gonth, Bhot, Nat, Bahelia, Pukkas, Batbar, Bind** and others.[1] The Sudras were divided mainly into two categories – **Sat-Sudras** and **Asat-Sudras**.[2] Those who served the upper three **varnas** and did not sell wine and meat were **Sat-Sudras** and those who did not serve the upper classes and had no restrictions in taking any kind of prohibited food were **Asat-Sudras**. The **Vanikas** had a respectable position in the society because they controlled the economic life of the region. They were divided on their occupational basis, viz., traders of wood, spices, metals, chemicals, precious stones, wine, horses, clothes, craftsmen, breeder of cattle, tillers of earth, lender of money, etc.[3] They constituted the middle class of the medieval Maithila society.

The **Chandalas, shoemakers, washermen, fishermen, Natas, Vena** (musician caste) were regarded as untouchables and they lived outside the village and were treated as **antyas, patitas** and **nirvasitas**.[4] Their touch defiled a man and if they had an intercourse with the women of upper caste, they would be sentenced to death.[5] According to Jyotirisvara, the **Sat** and **Asat** Sudras, untouchables and tribal castes were **mandajatiyas** or depressed classes.[6] The **Telis, Tantis, Nagals, Tivaras, Tulukas, Dhangal, Dhakals, Dhanukas, Dhoars, Dhunia, Dhalikara, Dombs, Dobtaruas, Chandars, Chamars, Gonths, Gonthis, Goars, Jawars, Shundis, Hadis, Parighas**, etc., belonged to the lower orders of the social structure. **Tanti** was placed in the high grade Sudra in the beginning because he satisfied the needs of social demand by weaving clothes and doing allied work. The **Tivars** were **Tiars**, a sub-caste of the **Mallahas** or a caste of fishermen. They were regarded as **asat-sudras** in Bengal. The **Tulukas** were possibly **turuks** – Turuka **Telis** and **Dhobis** were not unknown in Mithila. The **Dhangars** and **Dhanukas** were agricultural labourers. They received their wages in kind, mostly rice. The **Dhanukas** were pure agricultural tribes and they were known by different names in different parts of the country.

Gandhavanika, Tantuvaya, Modaka, Kumbhakara, Kanskara, Teli, Gops, Barui, Malakara, Napita, Karmakara, Shanka-Vanika, Chasi-Kaivarta, Sadgopa, Tambuli, Koch, Svarnakar, Sutradhara, Ahir, etc., were regarded as **Sat-Sudra** in Bengal and among the **Asat-Sudras** were **Saundika, Kalu** (oilmen), etc. In

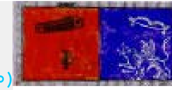


Mithila, the **Vanikas** were religious minded and enjoyed a respectable position in the court. But among the **Sudras** too, there were **bhojyanna** and **abhojyanna**. Family servants, herdsmen, barber, partner in agriculture, family sympathisers, etc., were bhojyanna who could offer food to the **Dvijas**. Devala included potter and milkmen among the Bhojyanna Sudras. Washermen, Hunter, Tailor, Nishad, Oilmen, Nat, Shoemaker, Dyer, etc., were Abhojyanna Sudra. The **Chandalas**, **Venas**, etc., lived outside the village. Besides these there were servants and slaves and there was a regular slave trade in Mithila in the middle ages.

The system of slavery in Mithila was one of the baneful aspects of society and it included a larger section of the lower orders. According to Candesvara, **Dasa, Kinkara, Bhrtya, Sudras**, etc., had to serve the **Dvijas**[7] and they were treated as slaves.[8] In that respect they were different from what we understand today by slaves. Candesvara[9] and others of Mithila have enumerated fifteen kinds of slaves: i) born in the house; ii) bought from others; iii) gifted by someone; iv) hereditary; v) saved during a famine by offering food; vi) received in mortgage from master; vii) enslaved on account of death; viii) captured in war; ix) won through wager; x) one who surrendered himself; xi) sanyasi turned slave; xii) enslaved for specified purpose; xiii) enslaved for food; xiv) enslaved through contact with slave girl; and xv) one who sold himself as a slave. Umapati refers to slave who surrenders himself saying, "**I am thine**". Slaves were employed for all types of works, e.g., massage and bath, cleaning clothes, arranging beds, fetching water, and doing all sorts of work. Jyotirisvara calls massagers **mardanias**.[10] Candesvara distinguishes slave from other kinds of servants. The five kinds of servants included pupil, apprentice, hired servant, supervisor of hired servants and the **Dasa**. The last one is treated by Candesvara as slave and four others are called **Karmakaras** or the performers of labour.[11] The hired servant had three categories: i) soldiers were placed in the highest grade; ii) agriculturists in the middle grade; and iii) porters in the lowest grade. They were employed for a specified period on promised wages either in cash or kind. Pure work was done by four types of hired workers[12] and impure work by sweepers and slaves.

Varna differentiation dominated the scene. An illiterate Brahmana could become a slave of a learned Brahmana. If a Brahmana was forced to employ a slave of other two varnas, he could employ them only for specified work. Brahmana was not expected to work as a personal attendant or to do impure job. A Brahmana woman could not be sold or purchased nor a brahmana could be enslaved.[13]

The practice of sale, purchase and mortgage of slaves (both male and female) was one of the characteristic features of the medieval Maithil society. There is a reference to this practice in the **Parijataharananataka** of Umapati.[14] Candesvara has suggested that poor people in times of need sold themselves[15] and in this connection he has cited the instance of Harischandra who sold himself as a slave. Hired servants were protected by law and there are rules for resolving disputes between the masters and hired servants[16] in the **Vivadaratnakara**. If the rates were not fixed earlier, servants of traders, cowherds and agriculturists received the tenth part of profit, milk and grains respectively. Beating of ploughmen and cattle-rearer was not unknown as this practice has been mentioned in the **Vivadaratnakara**. Legally the rights of servants and slaves were protected in the law books but to what extent were they followed in practice is a matter of conjecture. The family servants and slaves were described as **Kulamitras**. They could be **manumitted** by the master and the king in certain cases. We have the following provision regarding the slaves:

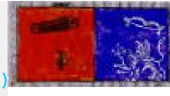


i. The king could free them if they were enslaved by force, or stolen and sold;
ii. If a slave saved the life of his master, he would not only be freed but get the share of a son in the master's property;
iii. If a slave was maintained during a famine he would return the master whatever he had consumed along with a pair of cows and he would become a free man;
iv. The mortgaged slave could be exempted from refunding money; the debtor could be free by paying off the debt; and the man who was bound to be a slave for the time being, would be free after the time passed;
v. The slaves captured in the battle could be free if they replaced capable slaves like themselves; a man who was enslaved for food would be manumitted if he would return the cost of food; and one who was enslaved through the connection of a slave girl would be free if he abandoned her.[17]

Katyayana holds that if a master had intercourse with his slave girl and she gave birth to a child, she was made free. The **Prakash** and the **Parijata** hold that the emancipation of slave girl with her child would be possible only if her master had no son. Mayukha remarks that it is to be done only if the child born is to be found endowed with exceptionally good qualities.[18]

Whatever be the pious wishes of the **Smritikaras**, **Sudras** and slaves were in a most deplorable condition. **Sudras** came to be synonymous with slaves.[19] If a **Sudra** abused a **Dvija** his tongue would be cut off.[20] The sale, purchase and mortgage of slave and slave-girls became a regular feature of social life.[21] The price of slaves varied according to the nature and necessity of both parties. During the reign of Alauddin Khalji the price of a working girl varied from five to twelve **tankas** and of a good looking girl between twenty to forty **tankas**. The price of a handsome slave varied from twenty to thirty **tankas**.

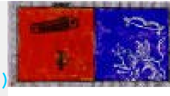
The Sudras[22] performed the work of a slave, for taking loan from the creditor, as a part time job. In Mithila, the price of a slave varied from two to seven **tankas** and the price of a slave-girl or women varied from one **tanka** to four **puranas** and so on.[23] We have a sale deed written by Misaru Misra[24], the author of **Vivadarattnakara**, dated fasli 396 (=1515 AD). The slaves were also mortgaged. They had to serve their creditors. One who failed to pay off the government taxes had to serve on all week days in lieu thereof without clothes and wages.[25] The Sudras were subjected to severe treatment and had to serve on daily meal and a piece of cloth only.[26] The slaves did all odd jobs including ploughing. The masters purchased slave girls for marrying his slaves.[27] The price of a slave or a sudra were sometimes decided in the presence of witnesses.[28] If for any reason the terms of the bond were not fulfilled the creditor would be entitled to two **panas** every day as compensation for the breach of agreement.[29] In such documents as sale deeds, mortgage bonds, etc., the name of the king, the name of the place, of the purchaser, of the slave, his age and complexion, the region of sale or mortgage, the price of the slave, the value of the bond, terms and conditions of the deed, the name of the writer and witnesses, etc., were mentioned and specimens of such drafts are found in the **Likhanavali**.[30] The system was so deeply entrenched in the social set up of Mithila that necessary laws were prescribed for all eventualities likely to arise out of the situation. When slaves were kidnapped, a case was instituted in the court of **Mahadharmadhikarnika**. In the court the witnesses verified the sale deeds.[31] Whenever a slave was freed, he was given a discharge sheet and after that he could live as a free man.



The slaves had nothing of their own. They were always at the mercy of their masters who disposed them off like commodities. The question of the ownership of slaves sometimes led to title suit and one such case was actually fought in the court of Mithila of which we have a copy of the judgement. This is one of the few rare documents of history as it shows how even in late period, the people of Mithila maintained the tradition of writing judgement in Sanskrit.[32] The judgement is in conformity with the ancient legal text and is dated Saka 1716 (=1794 AD).

Such deeds are found in Mithila and while commenting on Sachala Misra's judgement, Ganganath Jha discussed the importance of **Gaurivavatika** (or **Catika**). The significance of this term is not yet clear. This document was drawn by the master in favour of the new one giving up all his rights and interests in the slave. The word is technical and needs further investigation though for the present we can say that it was a term related to the system of slavery in Mithila. The use of the term related to the system of slavery in Mithila. The use of the term **Desa-Vyavahara** indicates that the system has been in vogue in this region since time immemorial. There are various documents in Mithila relating to this aspect. Two documents of 1647 AD and 1668 AD show that the slave girl was a virgin at the time of transfer. These girls were let off for marriage on payment of a particular sum to the master. Apararka holds that a slave girl becomes free if she is married to a master or if she had some carnal connections with the masters. In one of the documents the slave girl is married to the son of the master.

The system of slavery was regulated by law in Mithila as would be evident from the various references found in the contemporary literary sources. The slaves were also known as **Vahiyas** and this is evident from a number of records in Mithila. The **Vahiyas** were completely at the mercy of their masters and they had nothing to lose except their slavery. A **Vahiya** had to surrender himself to his master for life in return for a paltry means of subsistence granted to him. The **Vahiya** were the exploited lot who had to till the land, sow and reap, do all kinds of pure and impure job, look to the personal comforts of the masters who invariably satisfied their carnal appetites on the female slaves at the cost of their modesty. A slave had, in that sense, no social standing. The minimum decency of a human being was not even considered to be claimed as a matter of right by the slaves. The service documents are known as **Bahikhatas**. These are executed in set forms and are in nature of agreements duly signed by the concerned parties. The **Bahikhatas** are also slave sale deeds, a sort of contract, in return for some amount, which bound the servant to one master alone. The earliest **Bahikhata** is dated AD 1627/28, and such documents[33] came to be written till AD 1838. Even Maharaja Pratap Simha[34] transferred two slaves to one Ruchipati Jha. Another document was known as **Ajatapatras**, according to which slaves were emancipated after taking their prices as fixed beforehand. The **Akrarapatra** and **Janaudhis** differed from **Bahikhata** in that they do not bind the servant or slave to the master in every respect. The above two types of service contracts and the slaves were free to choose their way of life. These were executed by potters, washermen, labourers, **Vahiyas**, etc. A distinction has been drawn between a slave and a **Vahiya** but in the context of Maithila social structure, it is difficult to accept this position. It is true that after the judgement of Sachala Misra and as a result of the introduction of the British administration some change is perceptible and that is evident from the various forms of contract between the labourers and their employers and the **Vahiyas** and their masters. The **Nistarapatra** indicated the remittance of debt. For all types of work there used to be agreements between the employer and



employees and the lower orders, because of their economic dependence, had to abide by the most humiliating conditions imposed by their masters. Though the type of slavery known to us in Mithila is different from what we mean by the term 'slavery', the fact remains that these slaves did participate in the productive work of their masters but received nothing in return. The system operated within the feudal structure of Mithila and it had to be viewed as such.

The system was in vogue from the beginning of the medieval period to the end of the 19th century as the available documents show. Large number of such documents is yet found in the vicinity of Mithila. They were as good as the bonded labourers of the present day. They were given a piece of land and in return they had to dedicate themselves to the service of their masters. Even today in villages in Tirhut, this can be seen in respect of **Dhanuka, Amat, Tanti, Dhobi, Hajama** and others. These persons were required as domestic slaves, agricultural slaves and also for the purpose of daily work. The abolition of Zemindari and the pace of industrialisation in North Bihar have weakened the system of native slavery in Mithila. The institution of slavery was one of vital importance in the economic set up of the age when slaves produced and others enjoyed all round comforts of life.

Biru Kurmi, an employee of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, revolted in region of Purnea and asserted his independence. This is the lone case of defiance by a servant of a zemindar. When he was asked to present himself before the Maharaja, he replied defiantly. The actual nature of this revolt is not known. The lack of modern means of communication might have emboldened him to rise in the far off country in the Dharmapur pargana of Purnea-Saharsa area. He became an independent ruler of the area. There might have been many more instance of this type of which we have hardly any record.

APPENDIX

A.

1. गौरीववा(चा)टिका - शाके 1537 (=1615 ई.)

शाके 1537 वैशाखशुक्ल चतुर्थ्यां शुक्रे श्री रामचन्द्र शर्मा श्री कगा(पा)लदासेषु **गौरीववा(चा)टिका** पत्रमर्पयति तदत्रेत्यादि हमरा **वहिया** क हराईक बेटी पदुम्नीनाम्नी गौरवर्णा जे तोहरे बेटा जे श्री कृष्णा मे विआहलि से हमे एक टाका लेए तोहरा देलिआवे ताहि सञो हमरा कञोन सम्बन्ध नहि **साक्षित्वमत्र** श्री रामलाल मिश्र श्री सिद्धिनाथ झा श्री मदनन्तमहाशयानां लिखिलमिदमुभयानुमतेन श्री गंगाधरशर्मणेति श्री रामभद्रस्य ।।

It is a deed of emancipation from slavery because the executor talks of having given away and not sold. This is a specimen of medieval Maithili prose as well.

2. ल.सं. 549 अगहन 8 बुधे श्री गंगापतिशर्मणि वेलोंच सँ श्री भोराशर्मा **गौरीवचाटिका** पत्रमर्पयति **देशव्यवहारे** गोराउर 1 रुपैयालेल गतिरामकैवर्तक बेटी जलिया श्री गंगापति झा के ....विवाहार्थ स्वत्व परित्याग कए देलिएन्हि । एहि अर्थ साक्षी श्रीलाल सही श्री भोरा झा क ।

It is also a deed for the emancipation of the girl.

B.

बहिखत – A contract between the master and the slave.

1. सिद्धिरस्तु परमभट्टारकेत्यादि राजावली पूर्व के लक्ष्मणसेन देवीय गतनवाधिक पर्थ (?) शताब्दे लिख्यमाने यत्रां केनापिगत संवत ल.सं. 509 श्रावणवदी 14 रवौः पुनः **परमभट्टारकाश्वपात गजपति, नरपति, राजत्रयाधिपति** सुरत्राणशासत शाहजहां सम्मानित नओबाब हकीकत खाण सम्भुज्यमान तीरभुक्यन्तरित तीसाठतया संलग्न झोरिआग्रामे महोपाध्याय श्री प्रद्युम्न महाशया दासी क्रयणार्थं स्वधनं प्रयुज्यते धन एहकोप्येतत् सकाशात्तुलियास सं श्री बाछलिशर्मा एतदत्र नानामध्यस्थ कृतमूल्यनृरी राजत/स्तौ (?) शूद्रीमादायामीषु धानेषु वाडूनिजातीया स्वदैशितद्वादशवर्ष वयस्का सुकुमारी नाम्नी दासीं विक्रीतवान् यत्र विक्रीतधात्री 91 शून्याकुरं ....मत्र हरिअम्ब सं श्री खेदू शर्मा कर्महा सं श्री गोड़ाइशर्म परौली सं श्री ..... (**मिथिलांक** – पेज 12)

It is like a sale deed. Darbhanga Raj Library has large number of documents of this type.

2. महाराज श्री प्रतापसिंह बहादुर देवदेवानां समर विजयीनां श्रीधैरजिया वो श्रीभैरविया ....लीखतं आगा तोरो दुहु भाई के श्री रुचिदत्त झा क सुपुर्द कएल अछि खातीर जमा सौ ओतए वे सुमहा कमाएल करिहह चैत शुदि 5 रोज सन 1177 साल ....

This refers to the transfer of slaves from one master to another.

3. स्वस्ति ।। परमाराध्य श्री जयदत्त झा महाशयेषु श्री रत्नेश्वरस्य नमस्काराः समाचार जे पलटा क बेटा श्री हरंगिया **बहिआ** हमर बालक सो अपनुकाक लग अछ तकर हमे अपन स्वत्व परित्याग कय वहिया अपनुकाके देल कालि हमे हमर केयओ दायाकर तो झूठा एतदर्थे दानपत्र देल अपने पुत्र पौत्रादि क्रमे दाशकर्म नियुक्त करब इति ताः 26 आषाढ़ सन् 1218 साल मुल्की ।

श्री रत्नेश्वर शर्मणः

साछी :

श्री टेकनाथ झा

श्री नारायणदत्त झा

सा : पोखरिया

The above two deeds are in the form of letters.

C.

AJATAPATRAS – Deed of emancipation, 1828 AD.

स्वस्ति अजातपत्रमिदं ।। श्री बाबूनाथ मिश्र क ओ श्री श्री मुनि मिश्र क ओ श्री अनाथी मिश्र क श्री हलमना बहिया कें आशीष आगाँ तोहरो माइक तोहरा बहिनिक **तोहर तीनू प्राणी क मोल** रुपैया 16 से सोढ़ो रुपैया भरि पाओल तोहरा तिनू प्राणीक **अजातपत्र** लिखि देल काल्हिकाला कोनो तकरार न करी हाकीम पञ्चक घर झूठा होइ संन 1235 साल भादव वदि दशमी रोज शुक्र ....मोकाम पऽरिआही ।

सठामक उजुर न करी उजुर करी तँ अपन मामला मुद्रा सँ बाजि आवी ।

D.

AKRARAPATRAS (Contracts)

1. लिखतं बैजू पन्डीत ओ योगी पन्डीत ओ गीरधरी पन्डीत ओ एका पन्डीत कुम्हारक श्री कपिलादत्त मिशर के प्रणाम आगाँ हमरा सबहि एहाँ के अकरार लिखि देल अछि जे अखन जखन इन्दार टटाय वा भंगठाय तखन तखन तँ उडाह भंगठाह छोड़ा दीअ एहाँ क ओतए कोनहु बात उजुर न करी मजूरी न मागीअ अपने खुस बजाय सं **अकरारपत्र** लिखि देल सन् 1223 पूस वदि 10 रोज मंगल

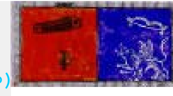
अस्य साक्ष्य

श्री बठहार झा ओ श्री भैया झा ओ श्री बझे झा

2. लिखितं **अकरारनामा** श्री मालकी धोबी मौजे उजान परगन्ना धरौर क आगाँ हम श्री केशव बाबू क धोवि आज तारिक सँ खुद भय गेल छीअ – श्री बचाइ सँ दर दरमाहा ताल्लुक न खुदत मजुदा धोयल करीअ दरमाहा चौदह आना सालीना लेल करीअ इति सन 1251 साल चैत वदि 14 रोज गो. श्री सनफूल मंडर ओ श्री मंगला कापड़ि साकिन उजान प्रः धरौर – सही श्री मालकी धोवी अकरार लिखल से सही ।

E.

JANAUDHI (a type of agreement with labourers)



लि. श्री गिरिधारी साहु स आई साकिन गजहरा प्रगन्ना यबदी आगाँ हम श्री वखेड़ी मिश्र सँ **जनौढ़ि लेल**। आ 78 आना जिम्मा श्री मालिक साहु ताके करार कएल अछि जे माहवारी एक गोटक जन देल करी वे उजुर ताहि मध्य कोनो खटका करी चासक हर्जा दी शिवाए अहाँक काज नहिं रहे तषन आन गिरहस्तक खेत कमाई ताहि मध्य कोनो बात बलबा ने करी इति सन 1277 साल तारिक पहिल दिन चैत ।

गो. श्री दुहरि झा श्री भुञ्जी साहु साकिन गजहरा प्रगन्ना जवदी

सही श्री गिरिधारी साहु जिम्मा श्री मानिक साहु जनौढ़ी लिखि देल से सही ।

F.

NISTARAPATRAS

1. लिः लक्ष्मण खवास साकिन पिलखवाड़ प्रगन्ना हाटी आगाँ हम श्री लक्ष्मीकान्त झा सँ कर्ज लेल अछि रुपैया दुइ 2 क तकर करार कएल जे चैत्र पुर्णिमा लगात महाजनी दर सँ सूद लगाए रुपैया दीअ नहि तँ एहि दुई रुपैया मध्य **अपन बहु नौड़ी** कए दी वे उजुर सन 1260 साल चैत्र वदि अष्टमी रोज शुक्र वैः घोङघी मिश्र साः ककरौड़ प्रगन्ना यरैल ।

सही श्री लक्ष्मण अमात ये लिखल से सही घोङघी मिश्र साः ककरौड़ प्र. यरैल ।

2. श्री लक्ष्मीनाथ झाजी उकें लिखितं मनसा रोसन ओ सिताइ रोसन ओ अइठाह रोसन साकिन गंगौली प्रगन्ना धरौर आगाँ हमे श्री ....मो चिलका लिखि देल अछि जे हमरा सबक गाए, बड़द, बकरी एसबहि खेत (ब) चर अपने सबहि ना काटिअ तँ ताहि खेत क औवल विगहा क पिसा करीअ सरकारक सावा रुपैया जुलवाना दीअ वे उजूर सन 1199 साल माघ शुदि 3 रोज –

श्री बुद्धिनाथ झा वो सिवल झा साः गंगौली ।

सही मनसा ओ सिताई ओ अइठाह रोसन लिखल से सही ।

G.

VRTTIPATRA (Grant of lands)

1. Grant of Maharaja Pratapa Simha dated 1763 in Zila Birnagar, Pargana Dharmapur, Sarkar Monghyr.

सिद्धिः महाराज प्रताप सिंह देवदेवानां सदा समर विजयी परमाराध्य श्री मणिनाथ ठाकुर महाशये वृत्तिपत्रमिदम् ....श्री प्रीति ब्रह्मोत्तर भूमि देल अछि साढ़े छव हाथक कट्ठा ....खारिज जमा श्री प्रीति ब्रह्मोत्तर भूमि जानि केओ मोजाहिम नहि होएत माघ वदि 13 सत्र सन सदर ।

2. सिद्धिः महाराज श्री श्री माधव सिंह बहादुर देवदेवानां सदा समर विजयिनां श्री ईशदत्त झा महाशयेषु **वृत्तिपत्रमिदम्** मौजे जिरवा प्रगन्ना हावी सरकार तिरहुति .... श्री ब्रह्मोत्तरः ।

3. ....महोपाध्याय श्री महिधर महाशयेषु महाराज श्री विष्णुसिंहस्य नमस्काराकुशलञ्च । मौजे मदना बछौर मध्य अहाँ काँ अछ तकर उत्पन्न होअ से अनाए लेब खर्च करब .... सन 1150 साल ।

H.

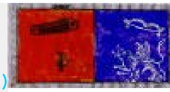
JUDGEMENTS (also known as **Vyavasthapatra**)

1. Earliest is dated 1743 – सिद्धिः श्री रामसिंह ठक्कुराणां परमसुप्रतिष्ठ श्री गंगादत्त झा कें **व्यवस्थापत्रन्दाति** –

2. Incomplete document of 1792 AD in Maithili language of quarrel between Ruchidatta Jha and Sankardatta Jha.

3. One dated 1839 AD – सिद्धिः महराज श्री श्री रुद्रसिंह बहादुर देवदेवानां सदा समरविजयिनां श्री देवकी नन्दन ठाकुर कें व्यवस्थापत्रमिदम् – (Vill. Parsouni, Pargana Naredigar).

4. Sachal Misra's judgement is well known and hence need not be quoted here.



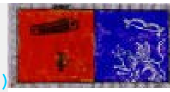
CHAPTER XVIII

VIDYAPATI AND HIS CONCEPTION OF KINGSHIP

Candesvara influenced Vidyapati in so far as the latter's political ideas are concerned. In order to assess the importance of Vidyapati as a political thinker, it would be advisable to assess the part which politics played in the formation of his unique personality. Everything about him bears the true mark of greatness. He employs real historical character to exemplify the message he intends to convey. His allegories, throughout his writings, his interpretation of kings, countries and his symbolism are all laden with politics. His interest in politics seems to have been determined by his love for the kingdom of Mithila in which he himself was an active participant. Mithila provided the basis of his notions of state. The kingdom of Mithila was the first constituent element of his theory of politics. His political ideas are nothing more than a general systematisation of traditional arguments and can be traced back to the earlier sources. Kautilyan argument for the national foundation of state as the realisation of human ends acted as beacon light to the later political thinkers.

A full-throated supporter of monarchy, Vidyapati regarded king as the source of all law. His respect for monarchy and monarchical form of government was naturally very high. His views are mostly preserved in his **Purusapariksa** and he is very much indebted to Kautilya and Candesvara for his own political ideas. His **Bibhagasara** is an evidence of the fact that he did not lack in legal training. Whereas Candesvara does not mention Cnakya or Kautilya, Vidyapati had great respect for Canakya.[1] What he has written about Sivasimha is ample enough to demonstrate that king was the essence of all existence, an embodiment of all light divine, and the highest of all. To him, a king was **Ekadasavatara, Deva, Naradeva, Narendra, Bhumipati, Raja, Prajadhipa, Nrpa, Adhipati, Ksitipala**, etc., and certain emblems of royalty as enunciated in the **VR** and **RR** are also referred to by him.[2] According to Vardhamana, a king should please his subjects by all means. The poet had a great love for the power and strength of a king.

Vidyapati enjoins upon his king to possess a robust health, for a perfect healthy body alone can serve the end of protection which is the principal duty of a king. He should have a clear knowledge of the scriptures and of various **vidyas** to aid him in dispensing justice. He considered Sivasimha to be an ideal Hindu prince.[3] Following Yajnavalkya, he holds that a king should keep all secrets of his government to himself. Vidyapati holds that a king should aim at consolidating his power by fixing the roots of his policy deep into the hearts of his subjects which would engender goodwill in them for him and in this way he would become unassailable. Although powerful he should not proceed on the wrong path. He should be capable of suppressing troubles among his subjects. He should treat all with perfect equanimity. Destroying the enterprises of his enemies, he should be intent upon the performance of his own action and striking enemies on weak points, he should conceal his own defects with great care. He should be internally mild and externally cruel. He suggests that a good king should always follow a middle path.[4]

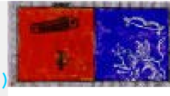


He should suppress all unworthy acts. In matters of statecraft he should rely on expert advice. He should try to run a benign government and he should not transgress the bond of established order and should go by the path shown by the science of polity. Following Umapati, our poet also called his king **Hindupati**.[5] It was the duty of the king to look to the observance of the **Varnasramadharma**. He regarded his monarch as more than a father.[6] Even before Vidyapati, Jyotirisvara knew the essence of eighty-four kinds of kingly devoir and polity, beginning with the control of horses and elephants and ending in statecraft and decisions at important junctures. Jyotirisvara's king was endowed with mercy, charity and friendliness and all other qualities of a cultured folk.[7]

The chief task of a king as thought of by a medieval Maithila writer was: i) to regain the hidden meaning of the holy Vedas; ii) to crush the enemies of the Brahmanas and gods; and iii) to lift the load from the earth and cut off sin.[8] Thus in keeping with the earlier tradition of the majesty of the kingly office, he also called his king a protector of **Dharma**. Loyalty was a precondition to all protection. Religious sanctity was attached to the kingly office. Just as it was not desirable to question the authority of god so was the case with the authority of the king. Unquestioned obedience killed people's incentive to goodness and made them servile. Vidyapati also describes the court of Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur and he says that special rows were assigned to the nobles in accordance with their ranks. Distinguished visitors waited for being presented to the sovereign and certain formalities were observed.[9] About kingship, Vidyapati says, "Kingship's rule, as it were a tree, of which the threefold fruit is glory, virtue and happiness; and if that fruit be not gained by a ruler, what need be there for his rule?"[10]

Kingship in Mithila in the medieval period was based on feudalism and the king was considered to be an overlord who was supported by a host of nobles, designated as **Mahamattakas, Samantas, Mahasamantas, Mahamandalikas, Rautas, Maharajas**, etc. These feudal lords had strengthened their hold in the then political set up. Devaditya, Ganesvara, Viresvara and Candesvara are the examples. Candesvara united the office of the chief justice with his other important portfolio. Haribrahma, the protégé of Candesvara, wrote a panegyric on his patron which is yet preserved in the pages of **Prakritapaingalam**.[11] In lieu of their services to the state, king granted **Jagirs** to these nobles. The king also looked to the social aspect of the administration.

About diplomacy and statecraft, Vidyapati has also enunciated certain principles: i) In every kingly policy is knowledge of these findings counselled (**PP** – Tale, 41); ii) Enemies, slanders and diseases are by their nature dealers of disasters. If measures be not taken against them step by step, they ruin the cause; iii) In the face of an irresistible calamity resignation verily is wholesome, but if he has power to resist, a wise man cometh to action, nor wasteth even one moment in delay (**PP** – Tale, 6). Vidyapati holds that it is the duty of the king to promote good and destroy evil. The chief possession of a king is his army; iv) No strength cometh from alliance with or from conflict with men who possess not authority (Ibid; Tale, 41); and v) Fair it is that equals should fight with equals, for then the victory is a thing of doubt (Ibid; Tale: 3, 20).



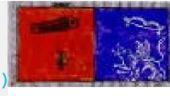
CHAPTER XIX

VIDYAPATI'S FAITH

Vaisnavism has been one of the most important cults of India, and its history goes back to hoary antiquity.[1] According to the **Upanisads**, God is the protector of all beings, is the lord of all, and dwells in the heart of every man; seeing Him as He is and everywhere, is eternal bliss, to be attained by contemplation on Him, and purification of the soul. This Upanisadic thought played an important part in moulding the later religious doctrines and influenced the later thinkers. It is from here that the conception of the Supreme Spirit manifesting itself in various forms sprang up, and it resulted in the development of the theory of **Avataras** or Divine Incarnations later on.[2] In the epic, Vasudeva is the eternal soul of all souls. Panini refers to the Vasudeva form of worship.[3] It was a predominant form of religion in the North-Western India, and even the Greeks adopted it, as is evident from the **Besnagar Pillar Inscription**.

In this form of religion, an attempt was made to introduce religious reforms in the shape of repudiation of animal slaughter and inefficiency of sacrificial worship. The new religion came to be represented to have been identical with that taught in the **Bhagavad-Gita**. The religious idea of devotion arose and received a definite shape when Vasudeva revealed the **Gita** to Arjuna.[4] In the **Gita**, we find the earliest exposition of the **Bhakti** cult. It preached the eternity and indestructibility of the human soul. It insisted on concentration of mind, contentment, disinterested action, and freedom from all sins through highest knowledge. **Bhagavan** is the source and last resting place of the world and the man of passion should surrender himself to Him. The form shown to Arjuna by Krisna is called Vaisnava form (**rupa**) and it appears that the association of Vasudeva-Krisna with Visnu had been accepted in the Epic period.

The Vaisnavism as a cult was in full swing in Bengal in the twelfth century AD, when Dhoyi, Umapati, Govardhana, and Jayadeva composed many verses on **Radha-Krisna**. Most of these poems are now collected in Sridharadasa's **Saduktikarnamrita**. All these poets intensified the devotional strain of a class of mystics. Similar account is found in the **Belva inscription** of Bhojyavarman which refers to **Krisna** as sporting with hundreds of Gopis.[5] While Vaisnavism was becoming a living force in Bengal, other parts of eastern India were busy discussing the minute details of different sects of Hinduism and Buddhism. Mithila, though a great centre of orthodox religion and culture, was not totally out of Vaisnavite influence. A gloss over the hitherto discovered archaeological materials gives us an insight into the prevailing religious belief. The images of **Visnu, Kamaladitya Laksmi-narayana, Garuda**, etc., are greatest proofs of the fact that here also the people were acquainted with the Vaisnavite thought. Jayadeva exercised a good deal of influence on the growth and development of Vaisnava thought in Mithila. **Parijataharana** of Umapati is a drama on Krisna's sport with the Gopis, and it was written in Mithila in the first quarter of the fourteenth century.[6] Jayadeva's influence on Umapati is apparent

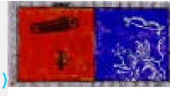


beyond any shadow of doubt.[7] Govindadatta's **Govindamanasollasa** is another example of literature on Krisna legend. Umapati unleashed a force of Krisna legend to be followed by other writers in literature. He paved the way for the future rich traditions of Maithili love poetry. There is no doubt that Vidyapati was greatly indebted to Jayadeva and Umapati. Vidyapati's contemporary Vacaspati Misra, in his **Tithinirnaya**, starts with an invocation of the highest being while most of his works are begun with an obeisance to Hari or Krisna.[8] Vardhamana, in his **Dandaviveka**, has also referred to Radha-Krisna. All these point to the existence of a good amount of literary output on the Krisna legend before the emergence of Vidyapati on the scene.

Vidyapati was not only aware of such rich heritage but was thoroughly conversant with the different ideals then preached. Krisna legend became the vehicle of his poetic excellence. He was well acquainted with the Vaisnava religion. A cursory glance into his **Puruspariksa** will acquaint the readers with a number of stray references about this sect. The reference to Mathura[9] and Dwaraka[10] shows that these important religious places with their age-old Puranic traditions were known to him. Reference to Laksmi and Narayana clearly indicates the prevalence of Visnu form of worship.[11] In **Bhuparikrama**, he chooses Balarama, elder brother of Krisna, as his hero.[12] All these clearly demonstrate his inclination. Even when he was completely free, he did not devote his energy in writing something original on Shiva or Shakti, rather he busied himself in copying the **Bhagavata** with great care. His only solace must have been the fact that the copying of the manuscript would give him opportunity to refresh his association with the **Bhagavata-lila**. It will be evident from his poems also that whatever he wrote without any dictation from his masters, he wrote songs bearing on the Krisna-legend.

The **Bhakti** movement of the medieval age took its inspiration from the **Bhagavata Purana**. A host of reformers preached a thorough reform in the conventional form of worship because that was shaken to its foundation by the Islamic impact. The contemporary reformers influenced Vidyapati.[13] The Puranic influence brought Krisna-lila on the forefront[14] and the advent of Islam acted as a catalytic agent which brought the loose elements together and gave birth to Vaisnava poetry. On the basis of the **Bhagavata** and the **Brahmavaivarta Puranas**, the conception of love was interpreted as a mode of play. It was supposed to symbolise the creative power, though to a rational mind it appears like an adventure into the uncharted future from the certainties of his past and present. The greatest defect was that it did not overcome the philosophy of illusion. The only difference was that old wine was now kept in a new bottle. The basis of medieval religious reform was Krisna-lila. **Lila** in the form of sports was first popularised by Jayadeva. Through **lila**, Radha-Krisna legend was brought down to the level of the people. The whole theory of love came to be based upon the concept as existed between the Gopis and Krisna. Grierson is of opinion that it dealt categorically with the relation of the soul to God under the form of love which Radha bore to Krisna.[15] Here Radha represented the soul and Krisna the Deity.[16] The immortality[17] of Radha-Krisna songs is an eloquent expression of his (Vidyapati's) **Bhakti**.[18] By means of **Lila-Bhakti**, Vidyapati wishes to attain communion with Hari.

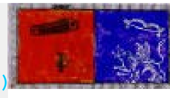
The feeling of devotion or **Bhakti-rasa** comprises the following principal sentiments, viz., **Shanta** or quiescent, **dasya** or relation of a servant, **sakhya** or friendly, **vatsalya** or filial, and **madhura** or sweet.[19] The greatest depth of emotion is reached in the sweet sentiment. An intimate personal tie is established between Krisna and the devotee in this mental attitude. The **madhura** or **shringara-rasa** is pronounced



to be the sweetest in the Vaisnava faith.[20] In this respect the Vaisnava poets were indebted to Sanskrit litersture. The sweet sentiment between man and woman was recognised as the dominant influence as early as the **Upanisads**.[21] **Shringara-rasa** was regarded as capable of making the universe permeated by sweetness.[22] Abhinavagupta, in his **commentary** on Bharata's **Natyasastra** pointed out that love elicited a response in the heart of every living being. Vidyapati took to **madhura-rasa** as it included all other rasas.[23] Love and sweetness were the remarkable features of his poetry and it is, through these two things, that God could be achieved. His **Bhakti** was based on **madhura-rasa**. It is to Radha-Krisna that he diverted his attention for everything and it was his belief that people could attain their object by pinning all faith on Radha-Krishna. Vidyapati's ultimate faith is evinced by the fact that he, in his last age, returned to Hari for guidance, nay for deliverance. It was devoid of all rituals. His influence on later Vaisnava literature would not have been so great had he been a poet of gross sensualism.[24] In Candidasa, the erotic passions of Krisna and Radha play a very important part. As a poet of pleasure, as Rabindranath called him, Vidyapati in his early youth wrote entirely secular lyrics, no doubt, but his study of the **Purana** and other Vaisnava literature enabled him to identify himself with the spirit of the time. As a court poet he must have written for the pleasure of his master, but there are also poems without **bhanitas** where the **lila** has been sung and if not all, at least these songs epitomise his Vaisnava leanings.[25]

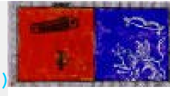
Vidyapati believed in the unity of the Godhead. His belief in the Goddess is evident from his invocation to the Goddess of energy. He did not bother his mind with the problem of the origin of the Goddess. He conceived of **Shakti** as the source of nourishment and sustenance. His description of the physical charms of Radha is clear indication of the fact that he was impressed by the **Shakti** form of Radha. He did not distinguish between gods. He was of opinion that all gods, with their different forms and shapes, were nothing but embodiments of the one Almighty, and it mattered little by which name we called them.[26] Vidyapati has been generally described as a **Shaiva** by a host of scholars, and conservative Maithil scholars fastidiously cling to this point. In support of their argument they say that Vidyapati's ancestors were **Shaiva**. But this does not seem to be convincing. He wrote his Sanskrit works on a variety of subjects at the instance of his masters or mistresses; and as a scholar attached to the court, he had to obey his patron. When ever free, he composed Radha-Krisna songs. His association with the Oinvara court was responsible for writing a number of works on **Shaiva** and other cults.

All poems written on palm leaves, hitherto discovered, are purely Radha-Krisna songs and not one of them deals with Shiva.[27] When he wrote for spiritual satisfaction, he wrote songs on Krisna. He was a conscious poet and finished scholar whose similes were brilliant poetical feats. The ideals of sensuality and lust are redeemed by those that are platonic and spiritual. He moves all day in the sunny groves and floral meadows of the earth, but in the evening rises high and overtakes his fellow poets.[28] He occupies a unique position among the singers of the Krisna songs. Looking through the vista of centuries, we see him standing in his own pure light as the guide and saviour of Vaisnava faith. He founded no sect and laid down no dogmatic creed. He inspired Candidasa and Caitanya and this influence has been rightly acknowledged by all.[29] He was the first of the old master-singers whose short religious poems exercised such potent influence on the faiths of eastern India.[30]



Even when he used the name of his patron in the **bhanitas**, he did not forget his allegiance to Hari and that is why, he called Sivasimha **Hari-like, Ekadasa-avatara, Abhinava-kanha, Nagar Guruvara Ratan**.[31] About fifty percent of his poem deal with Radha-Krisna.[32] His ultimate hope lay in Krisna. Whenever he felt desperate and became morose, he put his own feelings in the mouth of Radha and painted the picture of helplessness. In such a state of mind he always remained preoccupied with and concentrated his feelings on Radha-Krisna.[33]Unless one is inspired by a particular faith, one cannot show his poetic excellence. A close scrutiny will reveal to us the two types of **Padas** in Vidyapati: i) Gross sensual type which he wrote for pleasing his masters; and ii) highly spiritual and intellectual type which inspired the later Vaisnava poets. Charm and grace of poetry have been the subject of literary criticism, but his platonic and spiritual themes have been the basis of higher thinking of the Vaisnava philosophers. It was his association with the court that stood in his way of frank expression of thought, otherwise he felt himself identified with Hari.[34] Radha-Krisna's sports in the groves attracted his attention. We have to bear in mind that **Rasa-lila** is a patent story of the Krisna legend.[35] Examples of filial relationship are not lacking in Vidyapati.[36] In a dark night Krisna thinks how the Gopis will come after crossing the Yamuna and it is here that Vidyapati asserts that the Gopis are wiser than the Kanha and they know the way out. Love here takes the form of adventure.[37] Vidyapati's wailing for Madhava is a sign of poet's feeling for the hero. Such kind of attachment to Krisna is not possible for one who has not identified himself with the cause he upholds. Without this, one may sympathise with but cannot feel the actual pang experienced by Krisna. These poems are without any reference to the patrons. Radha is attracted by the excellent qualities of Krisna.[38] Radha's longing for Krisna has been picturesquely painted by the poet.[39]

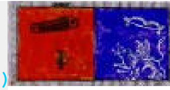
All these and many others will convince us that he had not only digested the philosophy of Krisna legend, but he had also identified himself with the cause, definitely at a later stage of life when he had to feel the pinch of poverty. In course of unusually long life, he had seen the ups and downs of the kings and princes, and had experienced all sort of pleasures from different sources. The grip of the feudal age was so deep-rooted that it was difficult for him to pronounce any ideal of equality on the basis of early democratic character of Vaisnavism. His successors in Bengal could at least do this quite easily, as they were free to do it. Therefore, when his life was spent in such an unfavourable atmosphere, he stuck to the Vaisnava faith, which was purely his personal acquisition and through which he wished to cross the ocean of mortality. His aim was ultimate salvation, and the influence of the **Upanisads** and the **Gita** was apparent. While he aimed at **moksa**, Caitanya did not care for any such thing. According to the latter, services to Krisna with all the senses working in harmony constitute **Bhakti**. Here lies the distinction between Vidyapati and Caitanya. It is true that Vidyapati also identified and found himself lost in Krisna[40] and ultimately sought refuge in Him[41], but with an eye to the theory of ultimate salvation. With a heritage of fatalistic philosophy of life in which salvation was the only objective, he could not be expected to go further. With Jayadeva he extended further, in a popular language, the influence of the theme of Radha-Krisna. Especially in the last stage of his life, his appeal was confined rather exclusively to a longing for salvation.[42] He was conditioned by the circumstances of time and environment; as such his concept stood for unity of Godhead, his personal attraction being to the beautiful form of Lord Krisna. Following the traditional custom, he could make his both ends meet by pronouncing no distinction between **Hari** and **Hara**. But, for his mental satisfaction, he composed poems on Radha-Krisna, whose picture is so deeply engrafted on his mind that he always liked to see Krisna palpably



before him. His life-long observation of his (Krisna's) picture failed to satisfy his longing eyes, which remained wet with wistfulness.[43] How far Vidyapati had gone in his association with Krisna cult is evident from the above statement. His constant faith in sin and other allied conventional philosophy is part and parcel of his Vaisnava songs; and while praying for salvation, he frankly states that throughout his life he remained preoccupied with amassing wealth by sinful means. Who can relieve him of such sinful actions? The wealth, thus amassed, was enjoyed by all, but on the day of judgement, there was none to accompany him. Naturally there was no other alternative but to remember his old friend Hari, who is kind and destroyer of sin.[44] Hari was his only solace; but let us not forget that he never distinguished between **Hari** and **Hara**: to him, being two representations of one Almighty.

It is very difficult to ascertain the actual faith or sect of Vidyapati in the present state of our knowledge. No last word can be said on this point. If we call him a **Smarta** worshipper of the five deities (**Pancadevopasaka**), we have to bear in mind that there is no mention of **Surya** (Sun) worship in his poems.[45] People supporting his association with **Shiva, Shakti** or **Pancadevata**, draw our attention to his varied writings but they forget that all these were not written by Vidyapati of his own accord, but at the instance of his patrons. Songs without reference to his patrons are helpful in ascertaining his actual faith. Worshipping ancestral deity is a part of household duties, which may not agree with his personal view. Perhaps this aspect of interpretation has been overlooked by all the supporters of the theory of his being a worshipper of **Shiva** or any other deity. One can remain a Muslim and a communist at the same time. According to his family and cultural tradition, he may continue to be a Muslim but his personal attachment may be to communism. Whether he ever practised **Shaiva** or **Shakta** cult, and what were his attainments are all clumsy guesses, not free from doubts. The argument, based on the unpopularity of his songs on Radha-Krisna has no force, is silly. The reason why his Vaisnava songs were not popular in Mithila is to be sought in the innate conservative outlook of the province. Their popularity would have meant the end of a class who thrived on the possession of the so-called spiritual knowledge and who kept a tight hold over the credulity of the people. When man can reach God without any **via media**, there is no necessity of a priest or the like. That is why the conservatives refused to make the songs popular. Checking the growth of Vaisnava faith and songs stunted the growth of the Maithili literature, which was consequently overshadowed by Sanskrit. Popularisation of the vernacular would have revealed to the people at large the secrets of knowledge, which, till then, was a preserve of the learned aristocracy. Sanskrit was the vehicle of thought of the class dominating over the unlettered masses to whom knowledge was a taboo. History has shown that in our sister province, Bengal, the Vaisnava movement gave rise to Bengali literature which rejuvenated her.

In his presentation of Radha-Krisna theme, Vidyapati set a new line. There is little or practically no difference between him and the **Bhagavata**. He has twisted the story according to his own convenience. The story begins with Radha's coming of age. According to our poet, she is younger than Krisna. The messengers talk to Radha about Krisna and **vice versa**. Both of them see each other and thus starts the **purva-raga** (the first attraction). This first occasion was caused through the messengers. During this period of **purva-raga**, the messengers depict the beauty of each other. Stage is then set ready for **abhisara** and the first meeting takes place. On return Radha narrates the experience of her first meeting with Krisna. Then begins **mana** (the pique) and again they meet and Krisna entreats Radha. **Abhisara**

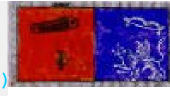


goes on and they meet each other in the groves and while doing so Radha is conscious of the unfavourable social criticism. In the meantime, Krisna informs Radha about his departure from Gokula to Mathura. The event takes place and the pangs of separation are now unbearable to both. Even with all accessories at her disposal, Radha does not feel happy and similar is the case with Kriena. Their feelings are narrated to each other by go-between. Imaginary and real meetings take place. The meeting is generally on a mental plane and Radha becomes satisfied.

The story on the whole is **ekangi** (gushing love of the one party), and Vidyapati has taken only such episodes which he thought necessary for his poetry, departing from the original wherever desirable. It is said that when Krisna went to Mathura, the messengers took Radha's message to him and **this part is his own invention**. He again brings Krisna from Mathura and arranges a meeting and thereby the pangs of separation are soothed. In the original **Bhagavata** story, reference is made to Gopis and not to Radha in particular. He has referred to Uddhava, which is another departure from the original. Vidyapati does not send him to Braja. From our poet's description of Uddhava, it appears that he was thoroughly acquainted with the original form of Krisna. **His originality lay in the fact that he succeeded in constructing a connected whole**. Inspired by the ancient **rasa** theory, he decorated the entire episode with his flowery poetic genius and that is why his **Padavali** is immortal.

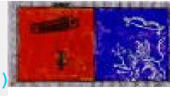
Krisna and Radha have been the themes of innumerable poets and writers. Vidyapati has introduced Krisna in his vigorous youth. Krisna, introduced by Jayadeva, was brought to perfection by Vidyapati, who has described his features, his role as a hero, and also his pangs of separation.[46] J K Misra, in his resume of Vidyapati following S K De, has held that though Vidyapati knew a good deal of **Bhagavata Purana**, yet his treatment of Radha-Krisna episode fundamentally differed from it.[47] The learned Doctor has shown that Vidyapati was influenced by **Brahmavaivarta Purana** and Jayadeva. A great poet generally takes clue from various sources and constructs the story in his own way. Kalidasa's **Abhijnana-Shakuntalam** is a living example of this type where he has shown his poetic excellence even though he was indebted to the **Mahabharata** for his story. The undercurrent of Misra's argument lies in his contention to support the theory that in Vidyapati there was not even a tinge of Vaisnava feeling. As an impartial observer he should have taken pains to note that certain deep feelings, expressed occasionally in connection with Radha and Krisna, cannot be the result of a mere feeling for poetry but of actual experience in life. The poignant and deep feelings of separation are unique. Radha's love attainment at particular moment reaches perfection to a degree unheard of, so much so that the poet pictures **viparitarati** in the coming of a **pralaya**.[48] Rabindranath, being stirred by the music of Vidyapati, says, "His poems and songs were one of the earliest delights that stirred my youthful imagination and I even had the privilege of setting one of them to music."[49] As a poet of love, he succeeded, like a successful florist, in presenting a beautiful garland of songs, the priceless heritage of which has never been forgotten.

A bird's-eye view of his writings reveals to us that he composed poems in honour of various gods and goddesses, besides Radha-Krisna. That has been the basis of a controversy about his faith. Islam's impact forced Mithila to be more orthodox in her outlook as she was then the only surviving Hindu state. The other side of the picture is that Mithila was also a centre of Sufi saints. Its influence on the cultural history of Mithila is yet to be studied and only then we shall be in a position to ascertain truth



pertaining to Vidyapati's sect. His association with the Muslim rulers does not rule out the possibility of his contact with the Muslim saints and their influence on his mode of thinking. The question about his faith has been kept open here for further discussion by the scholars though it has been pointed out that he had Vaisnavite leaning. Posterity remembers him for his love-lyrics attributed to Radha-Krisna. Grierson's remark on the solemnity of these love lyrics are worth quoting: "'God is love' is alike the motto of the eastern and of the western worlds. ....the warmer climates of the tropic have led the seekers after truth to compose the love of the worshipper for the worshipped to be that of supreme mistress Radha for her supreme lord Krisna...." He called them **Vaisnava bhajanas**.

Vidyapati was a great poet and philosopher of his age. Let us not bind him to any particular sect or faith unless we have sufficient justification to do so. I have shown elsewhere how our poet had to do a lot of things in accordance with the wishes of his patrons. Even believing in a particular sect, or subscribing to a particular view, which ran counter to the fixed etiquette of the court, was not allowed to anyone there. We should remember that Caitanya or Ramkrishna could preach independently because they were free to do so. Not only the court but the social bindings were also there for Vidyapati. He seems to have a Vaisnava at heart, but being a believer in the unity of Godhead, he wrote other things simply to maintain his position in the court and society. A critical study shows that he was a poet of hope and had faith in the potentialities of man. To him love was God.



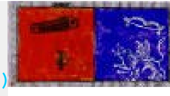
CHAPTER XX

SANSKRIT DRAMA IN MITHILA

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

Mithila is the only part of India where Sanskrit learning continued till the last quarter of the 19th century and where Sanskrit continued to be the official language of the court.[1] Since the beginning of the early medieval period, Mithila came to be known as a centre of new school of philosophy and it was here that the Buddhists met their pungent critics. Such critical studies ultimately led to the development of the **Navya-nyaya** system of philosophy, which, though born in Mithila, got its garb in Bengal. Another important contribution was in the domain of the **Dharmasastra** literature. Along with these developments, Sanskrit literature also marched forward in its different branches in which drama or the **nataka** was the most conspicuous. A critical study of the history of Sanskrit literature in Mithila reveals to us that no positive work, in this respect, has yet been done. **Kavya, nataka** and other aspects of Sanskrit literature in Mithila remain untapped and there is a vast scope of work in this field where scholars can dive deep with pleasure and profit.[2]

Since no positive work, in this field, has been done as yet, the present survey attempts to present an exploratory account of Sanskrit drama in Mithila. Sanskrit drama is one of the chief aspects of Sanskrit literature. According to Bharata, drama shall be a comfort, an amusement, and a refreshment to all those that are grieved. Kalidasa says, "Drama ....is an entertainment common to people of different tastes."[3] Bhavabhuti stands for sense and dignity in the drama.[4] Dhananjaya calls dramatic representations as the pure expressions of joy.[5] Bharata is of opinion that all activities are to be represented in a drama. The introduction of **Prakrta** in Sanskrit drama marked the beginning of the introduction of spoken languages in the literary dramas of great authors. Bharata sponsored this idea by pointing out that "in a play staged, composition should be based on the local dialects."[6] Since drama was a representation of human life in all its aspects, Dhananjaya suggested that in all the productions, dress, action, and speech should be taken directly from the society and should be properly observed. Through drama, literature was democratised to a great extent. Bharata's **Natyasastra** came to be recognised as a fifth Veda. Since scholarship, in ancient times, became the sole monopoly of pedantic scholars, interested in hair-splitting arguments, Brahma created drama for the Sudras. Nahusa is spoken of as the first patron of drama.[7] The non-sacrificing name of Nahusa speaks of the anti-Vedic origin of the drama. It is a non-Vedic development. Nahusa's quarrels with gods and Brahmanas are handed down to us in a legendary lore. The drama, probably, originated after the epic and represented people's culture in a majority of cases.[8] Drama is the natural exponent of higher form of fine art.

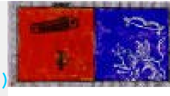


Nanyadeva, also known as Abhinavagupta, king of Mithila (1097-1147 AD), was one of the greatest writers on dramaturgy.[9] K C Pandey's identification[10] does not stand in the light of modern researches. There has been only one Nanyadeva, who was the king of Mithila. He wrote an exhaustive commentary on Bharata's **Natyasastra**. He emphasised that spectators' state of mind must be considered. Keith says, "It is in him (the spectators') that from the experience of life there comes into being emotional complexes, which is dormant, ready to be called into activity by the reading of poems or by seeing plays performed."[11] According to Abhinavagupta, a dominant feeling or emotion becomes a sentiment when it is transformed into an object of enjoyment. He has prescribed a greater variety of forms in so far as the question of **Nandi** or benediction is concerned. The sentiment of love, heroism, horror and fury are taken as primary and brought into connections with mental condition described as **druti** (melting), **vistara** (expansion) and **vikasa** (unfolding). He does not accept **ksobha** (agitation) and **viksepa** (movement to and fro) in this connection. In almost all the editions of Bharata's work, there is an enumeration of only eight **Rasas**, excluding the ninth, i.e., the **santa rasa**. In the **GOS** edition, we find that the text on the **Santa rasa** occurs at the end of Chapter VI. This additional text is commented upon by Abhinavagupta and appears to have been known to **Bhattanarayana**. Abhinavagupta makes an elaborate attempt to meet the objections against **santa rasa** and establishes it as a rasa.[12]

1. MURARI MISRA

The earliest reference about the existence of Sanskrit drama in Mithila is to be found in the 9th-10th centuries of the Christian era if we take Murari Misra as resident of Mithila. Murari was decidedly earlier than Jayadeva as we find the latter imitating the former in the **Prasannaraghava**.[13] Like Kalidasa's Meghaduta, we find Murari, in his **Anargharaghava**, describing the path to Ayodhya and in this connection, he emphasises to go through Mithila.[14] The **Anargharaghava**[15] is a story of Rama in seven acts. Act IV is important. It shows Ravana's minister Malyavanta lamenting on the failure of his scheme. Surpanakha arrives from Videha and tells of the union of Rama and Sita. Malyavanta advises Surpanakha to assume disguise of Manthara, the maid of Kaikeyi, with the view of securing the banishment of Rama. He is also cheered by the news, disclosed by Surpanakha, of Parasurama's exchange of hot words with Rama. Rama is ultimately banished. In Act V, Jamavanta overhears a dialogue between Ravana, disguised as a juggler, and Maricha in the forest. Jatayu sees the outrage of Sita's modesty and pursues the ravisher. Act VI gives an account of the two spies of Ravana, named Sarana and Suka. In Act VII, on his return journey, Rama passes over Malaya mountain, the forest, Narmada, Kanchi, Ujjain, Mahismati, Yamuna, Ganga, Varanasi, Mithila and Champa. From this particular **nataka** and others, we see that the dramatists were attracted more towards the epics and the **Puranas** than the Vedas as the epic stories are more humane in outlook and treatment if compared with the mythology of the Vedic hymns. Murari has not made any attempt to improve upon the traditional narrative. His remarks are always hyperbolic. He had a good grounding in mythological stories and that is why he has succeeded in presenting a good tale. He has been successful in presenting sentences with harmonious sound. His power of expression is marvellous.[16] The play has no dramatic beauty. His ideas, in most cases, are farfetched and unnatural while his diction is inscrutable. He was a man of scholarly reading and much vocabulary.

His similes are often original and strike as peculiar. With a generally characteristic and magnificent style, he has shown a good lyrical harmony. Krishnamachariar has rightly pointed out, "He is one of those



poets whom European critics have been unable to appreciate. ....The play has been considered for poetical criticism and grammatical bearing. In his **Siddhanta Kaumudi**, Bhattoji Diksit cites Murari's expression on authority."[17] His work shows purity of conception, delicacy of feeling and brilliancy of facts. Ratnakara in his **Harivijaya** refers to Murari as a playwright.[18] The **Anargharaghava** is a more ambitious play. It is a poetic composition of 567 verses. Here Rama talks of the **vaidarbhi** style in poetry and **viparitarati**, etc. It is one of the best examples of the degradations to where the Sanskrit language and dramatic art had sunk. Murari himself admits, "How this good composition of Valmiki has become the joint stock capital for all writer merchants."[19] From various sources, we learn about the ability of Murari as a poet and a dramatist.[20]

Murari was the son of Vardhamana and Tantumati. He belonged to Maudgalya gotra. Murari is claimed to be a Maithila. The most important argument in favour of this supposition is that almost all the commentaries on the **AR** were written by Maithila scholars. The best commentary on this **nataka** is by Ruchipati.[21] There are various commentaries on the **AR**, viz., commentaries by Purna Saraswati, Harihar, Manavikrama, Ruchipati, Dharmananda, Krisna, Laksmidhara, Visnupandita, Visnubhatta, Narachandrs, Bhavanatha Misra, Dhanesvara and others. Two copies of the incomplete **MSS** of the **AR** in Maithili character were discovered from Mithila.[22] There have been various '**Muraris**' in Mithila, but the author of the **AR** must be distinguished from them. The Maithilas claim not only Murari as their own but also Krsnamisra, the author of the **Prabodhachandrodaya**.

2. KRSNAMISRA

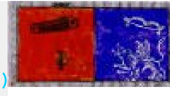
The **Prabodhachandrodaya** of Krsnamisra begins with the **Nandipatha** of two verses and represents a type of which we have no other earlier specimen. The drama is unique in the sense that it follows a style of treatise of different systems of Indian philosophy. It is a commentary on the **Vedanta** aphorism and represents the Upanisadic **Vedanta**. It is one of the best satires in Sanskrit literature. Here the traditional schools of philosophy have been discussed on their merit. Since the author has tried to philosophise the whole thing, the dramatic force has suffered a setback here. **Mimansa** and **Tarka** had their origins in Mithila and our author seems to have been well conversant with those thoughts. The spirit of Vedic sacrifice was also preserved in Mithila and Krsnamisra seems to have been guided by the Vedic spirit. This is one of the reasons why he is so insistently claimed as a Maithila. A **commentary** on the **PC** was noticed in Mithila. It is on the palm-leaf and is written in Maithili character.[23] There is a reference to Kumarilasvami and also to the banishment of Buddhism. The **PC** was extremely popular in Mithila and some dramas have been written here on this line.[24]

The **PC** is a typical drama of its type and contains much of the then philosophical theories. It is in six acts and there are about 44 actors. Besides the **Sutradhara** and his wife we have the following characters:

विवेक is the hero.

मति is the heroine.

पुरुष is उपनिष्पति.



प्रबोधोदयः is the son of पुरुष.

श्रद्धा is प्रकृतित्रयः.

शान्ति is the sister of विवेक.

करुणा is a friend of शान्ति.

मैत्री is a friend of श्रद्धा.

विष्णुभक्ति is a friend of उपनिषत्.

उपनिषत् is वेदान्तशास्त्र.

सरस्वती is the friend of विष्णुभक्ति.

क्षमा is the maid-servant of विवेक. वैराग्य, निदिध्यासन and संकल्प are मनस् उत्पनाः सारथी. प्रतिहारी etc. Are इतरमहामोह and enemies of विवेक.

चार्वाक is a friend of मोह. काम, क्रोध, लोभ, मोह, दम्भ, अहंकार are मोहामात्यादयः मनःसंकल्पनात्मकम्[25]

दिगम्बर, भिक्षु, क्षपणक, कापालिक are बृद्धिजिवादिमत-प्रवर्त्तकाः.

मिथ्यादृष्टि is the wife of मोह.

विभ्रमावती is the friend of मिथ्यादृष्टि.

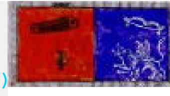
इतिः is the wife of काम.

हिंसा is the wife of क्रोध.

तृष्णा is the wife of लोभ.

वटु, शिष्यः, पुरुषः, दौवारिकः are others इतर.

Here we find **Buddhi, Kirti,** and **Dhrti** conversing when Buddha, adorned with his halo, appears. **Kama** and **Rati** appear in the first scene. The story begins with **Viveka** and his queen **Mati**. The king takes **Upanisad-Devi** and a son **Prabodha** (Awakening) was born to them. In Act II, there is a scathing criticism of the **Panditas** of Banaras, where **Dambha** and **Ahamkara** conspire to prevent the birth of **Prabodha**. When **Sraddha** tries to bring together **Lady Upanisad** and **Viveka, Mithyadrsti**, wife of **Mayamoha** is set on her. **Sraddha's** daughter **Santi** is to be killed by **Krodha** and **Lobha**. In Act III, Buddhists, Jainas and **Kapalikas** are criticised. The three Bohemians decide to abduct **Sraddha Sattviki** (Pure faith) who is supposed to be living in company of **Visnubhakti** (devotion of Visnu). In Act IV, **Sraddha** is rescued by **Visnubhakti**. In Act V, the battle is described and at the end, the Buddhists are driven out. **Lady**



Upanisad stays with **Yajnavidya** (the lore of sacrifice), **Mimansa** (ritual science), **Tarkavidya** (Logic) and is brought to the king where the birth of **Prabodha** is announced. In spite of its being of little importance to the dramatic literature, the **PC** is an important contribution towards the development of Sanskrit Drama in Mithila. In certain respects, it is a unique production in the history of Sanskrit literature. Krsnamisra flourished in the eleventh century AD.

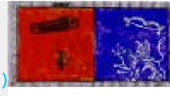
3. ABHINAVAGUPTA

In so far as the dramatic literature in Mithila is concerned, the **Abhinavabharati** of Abhinavagupta is an epoch-making contribution. It represents the erudition of scholarship and covers the whole ground connected with the drama. It discusses in detail the architecture of the theatre, dress and other equipments of the actors, religious ceremonials, music, dance, movements, gestures, mode of delivery, the various classes of drama and poetry and their emotions and sentiments. All fine arts in due proportion were to be employed in the performance of a drama. Our ancient thinkers believed that all the fine arts were concentrated in dramatic art. Abhinavagupta has explained the implications of '**Vyutpatti**' and '**Dasarupa**' and has further pointed out that an emotion becomes a sentiment when it is transformed into an object of enjoyment through the co-operation of the determinants, the consequences including the involuntary manifestations of feelings. There can be little doubt that Abhinavagupta exercised a considerable influence over the writers and stage directors of Mithila during the periods following him. Though not directly a writer of any known drama, Abhinavagupta certainly laid the foundation of the science of dramaturgy in Mithila.

4. JYOTIRISVARA THAKUR

Jyotirisvara Thakur was one of the most prolific writers of Mithila in the middle ages. His knowledge was encyclopaedic and that is evident from his masterpiece, the **Varnanaratnakara**. He wrote an important work on erotic known as **Panchasayaka**. He flourished in the firat quarter of the 14th century AD. Since the authenticity of Umapati is in question, Jyotirisvara stands as the first known dramatist in Mithila. He was also known as **Kavisekharacharya** and was a fast friend of Harisimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty. He is famous for his **prahasana**, named **Dhurtasamagamanataka**.[26] It is believed that this drama was staged at the victory festivals in the court of Harisimhadeva. It refers to the contest of Viswanagara and his pupil Durachara. Viswanagara, **jangama** or mendicant of a particular class, quarrels with his disciple for the possession of Anangasena, a courtesan. They refer the case to Assajati Misra, a Brahmana, who lived by solving the knotty problems of law and he decreed that until it could be decided to whom the damsel belonged, she should remain under the protection of himself as umpire. The pupil had every reason to complain as he had seen the damsel and had confided his love to his master. The judge impounded the damsel for himself while the **Vidusaka** sought to secure the prize for himself. The barber, Mulnachaka, turned up to demand the payment of a debt from Anangasena, which was paid by Assajati. The text has since been published.

The drama is said to have been staged after Harisimha's victory over the Muslims. It is the first authoritative **nataka** in Sanskrit in Mithila.[27] In Mitra's **notices**, we have the following entrants:



Ms. No. 85 धूर्तसमागम प्रहसनं

ग्रन्थकार – ज्योतिरीश्वर

अक्षर – नागरं – देशीय कागज

There is another complete **MSS** of this **nataka** in the Raj Library, Darbhanga, the details of which are given below.[28]

Character – Maithili.

In loose sheets, line 8 on a page up to **folio** No. 6; after that only nine lines on one page, on page 8, there are ten lines; and again n **folio** No. 10, there are eight lines, after that nine lines and on the last page seven lines only.

11 **Folios** (10.7" × 3.7"), 38 letters in a line.

This is a complete ms.

Beginning : ॐ नमोगणेशाय

हर्षादम्भोज जन्मप्रभृति दिविषदां संसदि प्रीतिमत्या

स्व सामौलौ पुरारे दुहितृ परिणये साक्षितं चुम्ब्यमाने ।

तदवक्त्रं मौलिवक्त्रे मिलितमितिभृशंवीक्ष्य चन्द्रः सहासौ ।

दृष्ट्वा तदूत्तमाशुस्मित सुभगमुखः पातुः वः पंचवक्त्रः

अपिच – वक्त्राम्भोरुहि विस्मिताः स्तवकिता वक्षोरुहि स्फारिताः।

श्रोणिसीमनि गुम्फिताश्च वलयो वक्षणोश्च पुन विसरताः ।

पार्वत्याः प्रतिगात्र चित्रगतयः तन्वन्तु भद्रास्रवो ।

विद्वस्यान्तिक पुष्पसायक शैरीशस्य दृग्भंगयः ।

End:

विदूषकः – नान्धन्ते सूत्रधारः । अलमविस्तरेण ।

मिश्रस्य करचरण वन्धनमपनीय

भो आणवेद मिस्सोकि अबरम्

अहो अपि ऑणिब्वाह इस्सं ।

सन्तः शान्ति पराभवन्तु सुखिनः

सौजन्य भाजा जनाः । इति निष्क्रान्तः ।

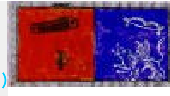
5. UMAPATI UPADHYAYA

The tradition of dramatic literature and art did not end with Jyotirisvara. The decay of Sanskrit literature in other parts of India did not bring about any alteration in so far as the growth of Sanskrit literature and drama in Mithila was concerned. The **Parijataharana**[29] of Umapati Upadhyaya is an example of the interest taken by the people of Mithila in the growth of dramatic literature. True it is that the glory the classical age of Sanskrit literature was no longer there, but this much is evident that the people, in general, had begun to take active interest in this field and that is why songs in Maithili were introduced along with conversation in Sanskrit or Prakrit. Various dramatists of this name are known in Sanskrit literature.[30] Aufrecht mentions fourteen Umapatis. Jayakanta Misra calls Maithila Umapati as a **Kirtaniya** dramatist.[31] Mr Singh calls it a drama of the **Rupaka** class.[32]

The story of the **nataka**, in brief, is as follows: Narada presents a parijata flower to Krsna which he gave to Rukmini. Satyabhama was enraged and Krsna sent to Indra for some more flowers, which he refused to give. Thereupon there was a war wherein he was defeated and Satyabhama was propitiated. The plot is finished and the characters are well developed. Arjuna has a distinct role to play. Umapati's songs teem with allusions, each of which suggests a definite picture.[33] The story of this **nataka** can be traced to 124 to 135 of the **Harivamsa**; **Visnupurana** (V. 30, 31) and the **Bhagavatapurana** (X. 69). The author, here, follows the **Harivamsa** with only one difference that Krsna's assistant, in the fight with Indra, was, according to him not his son, Pradyumana, but his friend Arjuna Dhananjaya. A **nataka** is a heroic comedy in not less than five acts and hence this name does not seem appropriate in this case (**Parijataharana**) as it is only in one act. This is a speciality with almost all the **natakas** of Mithila. Umapati seems to have been influenced by the **Gitagovinda** of Jayadeva. Since Umapati is a very controversial figure in the whole realm of dramatic literature in Mithila, it is desirable to discuss here the date of the **Parijataharana**.

DATE OF UMAPATI

The date of Umapati Upadhyaya is still controversial. Grierson placed him in the first half of the fourteenth century of the Chriatian Era.[34] The learned scholar held that Harisimhadeva (1304-1324) of the Karnata dynasty abdicated and retired to forest, but as a matter of history, he seems to have been conquered and stained by a certain Mukundasena.[35] Umapati says that Harideva Hindupati successfully opposed Muslim attacks and he was one "**whose dread scimitar cuts the forest of the Yavanas**".[36] This may refer to Ghiyasuddin's attack on Tirhut.[37] It is a recorded fact in history. Umapati was a resident of Koilakha[38] and is the only and the first unquestioned and recognised writer of **nataka** in Mithila. He calls his protégé, '**Mithilesa**'.[39] Since he has called his protégé 'Mithilesa', it is difficult to accept the suggestion put forward by Pandita Chetanatha Jha that Umapati was the courtier of an ordinary king of Nepal. Grierson has rightly pointed out: "How could a poet of Mithila ....have called the petty princeling a lord paramount of other kings and 'a king of Mithila' if that is the meaning of **Mithilesa**?"[40] The



attempt of Jayakanta Misra to identify '**Hindupati**' of Umapati with a king of Bundelkhanda is all the more confusing.[41] How can a foreigner be called '**Mithilesa**' by a poet of Mithila? It is vain rather unnecessarily demagogic to suggest that Umapati meant the king of Bundelkhand in his appellations '**Hindupati**'. A simple mention by Lochana could not have solved the question of his date and identity as J K Misra believes.

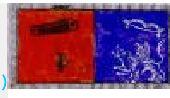
Umapati has paid high tributes to his patron, Harharadeva.[42] If we dive deep into the contemporary Sanskrit texts, it will be evident that he was a dread to the Muslims.[43] It seems plausible to suggest that Harisimhadeva succeeded in ousting the Muslim raiders in Mithila till he was finally defeated by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq and ultimately fled to the hills.[44] The traditional **sloka** in Mithila represents that Harisimhadeva fled to Nepal in 1326 AD.[45] The findings of Pandita Chetanatha Jha are based more on tradition than on solid facts. Even on philosophical and linguistic grounds, we cannot place him later than the fourteenth century AD. Hence in the present state of our knowledge and unless further evidence is forthcoming, it is better to assign Umapati to the first quarter of the fourteenth century AD.[46]

6. MANIKA

After the occupation of Mithila by the Muslims, a good number of Sanskrit poets and dramatists fled to Nepal and produced their literary creations there. There is no doubt that the relation between these two countries had been very cordial and intimate since time immemorial.[47] Vidyapati's influence on Nepalese life and culture is immense.[48] Manika of Mithila (c. 14^{th} century AD) exercised a considerable influence over the literary traditions in Nepal. He is said to have written **Bhairavananda nataka** in the court of Jayasthiti of Nepal. Manika was the son of Raja Vardhana, expert in dramaturgy. The **Bhairavananda nataka** is secular drama. Bhairava is the hero, while Madanavati is the heroine.[49] Madanavati, celestial dancer, is cursed by a **Rsi** to become a **manusi**. This drama was staged on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of Dharmamalla, son of Jayasthiti. This was probably the earliest Sanskrit drama in Nepal written by a Maithila in the reign of Jayasthitimalla (1318-1394).[50] Like all other successful dramatists of the middle ages, Manika seems to have been successful in the execution of his plots.

7. VIDYAPATI

Vidyapati is one of the greatest poets of India. After the conquest of northern India by the Muslims, there was an all round decadence in the country and the Sanskrit scholarship suffered a severe setback. During this period of decadence, the Sanskrit scholars of the time took refuge in those parts of where Muslim power was the slowest to extend. The Sanskrit learning deteriorated, while the vernacular literature progressed well. Vernacular was the only means of communication between different sections of the populace. We have seen above that Umapati in his **PH** employed vernacular songs to make his drama more attractive. Even in the classical age of Sanskrit literature, Prakrit and Pali were used in the **natakas** simply to make them more attractive for the people. In the middle ages, it was idle to seek name, fame and popularity through the medium of a language for which there was no popular audience. Only few could understand pure Sanskrit. Vernacular, therefore, found its way in the literary Sanskrit



compositions of the time and in Mithila we find its firat use by Umapati.[51] It has been observed by an eminent authority that 'for centuries the Sanskrit dramas continued to be produced in very substantial numbers and that so strong was the force of tradition that the first attempt to introduce the vernacular into the drama by Vidyapati Thakur in Bihar (I consider Umapati to be the first) took the form of producing works in which the characters use Sanskrit and Prakrit and the songs only are in Maithili.'[52]

The late Sivanandan Thakur brought to light a Sanskrit drama, by Vidyapati, entitled **Manimanjarinatika**[53], an extract of which is given below:

अदिष्टोऽस्मि परिषदा यदद्यश्री विद्यापतिनाम धेयस्यकवेः कृतिरभिनवा **मणिमञ्जरीनामनाटिका** भवद्भिरस्मदग्रेऽभिनेतव्येति तद्भवतु तावत् प्रेयसीमाहूय संगीतकंसम्पादयामि ।

Another **nataka** of Vidyapati is entitled '**Goraksavijaya**'. It has speeches in Sanskrit and songs in Maithili:

श्रीविद्यापतिसत्कविपुरस्य गोरक्षविजयनामनाटक नरनाथमहाराजाधिराज श्रीमात्शिवसिंह देवपादः ।

He was one of the most versatile scholars of Mithila and has written on almost all branches of learning. So long as his dramas are not published, it is difficult to evaluate their importance. In his **Padavali**, Vidyapati has given enough food for thought. There also his dramatic art is clear.[54] Vidyapati was a successful dramatist. In spite of being a first rate lyricist, he did not give up writing in Sanskrit as that was the yardstick of gauging scholarship in those days. His two dramas in Sanskrit have since been published. As a sound scholar of Sanskrit, he seems to have maintained the decorum of original standard in his dramas.

8. JAYADEVA MISRA

Jayadeva Misra's **Prasannaraghava**[55], in seven acts, is an important contribution to the field of Sanskrit drama. In the opening scene, the dramatist offers a kind of an apology by making the actor ask the manager as to why all poets write only about Ramachandra. All the traditional plots of Rama legend unroll before us, brightened up, here and there, by the feverish poetic effusions of the dramatists.[56] Here we have got the conception of the primeval **purusa** in the form of a boy. The whole of Act IV is more of the nature of an interlude than act in the play. The **PR** is the natural exponent of the higher form of the dramatic art of the post classical period. Keith says, "It is a typical play of the later drama. The spectacle of the river goddess grouped round the ocean affords admirable scope for an effective tableau"[57], but it is wholly out of harmony with dramatic action.

There have been several Jayadevas in Sanskrit literature.[58] In Mithila, Paksadhara Misra is also known as Jayadeva who flourished in the 15th century. The author of the **PR** was a Maithila, no doubt, but it is difficult to say if he was identical with Paksadhara.[59] The author of the **PR** also wrote a book named **Chandraloka** and he had the surname **Piyusavarsa**.[60] This Jayadeva was the son of Mahadeva and Sumitra.[61] Since he is quoted in the **Alamkara Sarvaswa** of Ruyyaka, he can be placed in the 15th century.[62] Jayadeva was a well-known poet and dramatist of his time and his influence on Tulsidasa can be gleaned through the following lines:

Prasannaraghava (Calcutta edition) –

चन्द्रहास हर मे परितापं

रामचन्द्र विरहानल जातम्

त्वं हि कान्ति जितमौलिक चूर्ण

धारया वहसि शीतलमम्भः ।। (P. 127)

Ramayana (P N Bhargava, Lucknow edition) –

चन्द्रहासहरु मम परिताप

रघुपति विरह अनल संताप ।।

शीतल निशि तव असि वर धार ।

कह सीता हरु मम दुख भार ।। (Sundarkanda; P. 376)

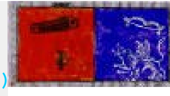
Instances, in this respect, can be multiplied. (Cf. **Prasannaraghava**; pp. 5, 27, 129, 132-3. **Ramayana**; pp. 119, 377, 378-9.)

Besides, being a dramatist, Jayadeva was also a **Naiyayika**, but different from Paksadhara.[63]

9. BANAKAVI

Banakavi was a Maithila Brahmana and belonged to village Bhadarisama near Manigachi station of the North-Eastern Railway. He is said to have founded **Vaneswari Bhagawati** in that village. The image is still there and is held in reverence. He is different from the reputed author Bana of **Harsacharita** fame. Banakavi was a very famous and important Pandita of Mithila. He is the author of **Parvatiparinayanataka**.[64] Keith nurtures doubt about the authenticity of this dramatist.[65] According to Keith, his real name was Vamana Bhatta Bana. The author of the **Srngarabhusana**, Bana, was different from Banakavi.

The **Parvatiparinaya** deals with the rituals of marriage ceremonies prevalent in Mithila. The drama is in five Acts and is based on the **Sivapurana**. In **Nandi**, there are two verses and the **Sutradhara** comes after that. The **prastavana** ends with **Nati** and **Sutradhara** and then comes Narada. Then Himavana enters with Mena and others and that closes the first Act. The second Act begins with **Viskambhaka** and then with the conversation of Vasantika and Rambha. Dramatically speaking, this is not proper. Here it should have been **Pravesakah**. Devanandi, Brhaspati, Devaduta, Kamah and Vasanta also appear. In Act III, both Brhaspati and Mahendra enter followed by Narada, Rambha and Vaitalika. Nandi, Jaya-Vijaya, Sankara and Parvati appear in Act IV. In Act V, Kanchuki, Himavana, Siladhara, Kausiki, Narada, Sankara, Sarangi, Brahma, Brhaspati, Parvati, Jaya-Vijaya, Kulaparvartah and others appear. On the whole, the drama is good and up to the mark though it lacks in the qualities, found in the dramas of the classical period.



Popular tradition makes him a friend of Vacaspati Jha and brother of Ruchipati. On this basis he may be placed in the second half of the 15th century.

10. SANKARA MISRA

Sankara Misra stands as a prominent luminary in the firmament of Mithila's sky of dramatic literature in the 15th century. He was the son of Bhavanatha and nephew of Jivanatha. He was an inhabitant of village Sarisava.[66] He is the author of **Srikrsnavinodanataka**. There have been various persons of this name in Mithila.[67] Our dramatist is to be distinguished from Sankara Misra, the author of **Smrtisudhakara**. Besides **Srikrsnavinoda**, Sankara wrote **Manobhavaparabhavanataka**[68] and in his younger days, he also wrote a comedy on the marriage of Siva-Parvati, entitled **Gauri digambara-prahasana**[69], two **MSS** of which have been noticed (one on palm-leaf and another on paper).

The following extracts from the **Gauridigambara** are available.

Beginning: शङ्करायनमः ।

दिदीदिन्दीन्दीध किकटनदन्नन्दिमुरजं ।

रणद्राणद्राणद्रणरणरणद्धर्घररवम् ।

स्फुरत्फूफूफूफूफूफणिपतिफणाफूत्कृतिशतं

शिवंभूयोभूयः प्रथमनटनाट्यन्दिशतुवः ।

End: श्रीमन्तः सन्तुसन्तः सपदि सुमन सां सौमनस्यापवर्गौ ।

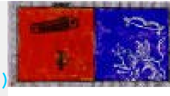
षट्कर्माणस्त्रिकालं हषिरनु पहतं जुह्वतां प्रीतिभाजः ।।

गविश्वाम्भोर्पराश्च प्रचुरमिह पयः किञ्च मुञ्चन्तु नित्यं

राजानश्च प्रजासु प्रकृतिषु च सदा नीति भाजो भवन्तु ।।

It is a Sanskrit farce dealing with the marriage of Siva-Parvati. Sankara Misra was a great philosopher and wrote chiefly on **Vaisesika**, rituals, **smrti**, etc. The **Gauridigambara** was probably staged at the instance of his father.[70] He was alive in Saka 1415 (=1488 AD?).[71] He also wrote a commentary on the **Gitagovinda** of Jayadeva.[72] He built a temple of goddess Durga which still stands in village Sarisava. Since his dramas are not published, we cannot evaluate their importance. There can be little doubt that he was a finished scholar of his age. His deep learning and scholarship impressed his writings and his influence on the Sanskrit literature of Mithila is immense.

11. DEVANANDA



Devananda, also called Kavindra, lived during the time of Maharaja Mahinatha Thakur and Narapati Thakur. His best known drama is **Uasaharana**.[73] It is mutilated and incomplete. There is nothing remarkable in this drama. Few extracts are as follows[74]:

Beginning – विजयं सदा । असुरास्सब्दते प्राप्ता

नूनं क्षयभयान्तिते । पुनराकाशे करनं ।

Jayaswal – Catalogue-II. 48. No. 43. The colophon reads as follows: इतिश्री महामहोपाध्याय दिनेश्वरमिश्रात्मज श्री शंकरमिश्र विरचितायां श्री शालिनाथ कारितायां गीतगोविन्द टीकायां ....

This Sankara is the **atmaja** of Dineswara. He (Sankara) is said to have written commentaries on **Vaisesika** and **Nyaya** and also on the **Gitagovinda**. His residence in Sarisava is still located.

Gangadatta in his **Bhrngaduta** says:

मीमाँसायाः श्रवण सरसा शेमुषी तावकी चेत् ।

चिते चिते किमपि कविताऽकर्णने कौतुकेवा ।।

तवभ्रमनं वुद्धजन चतुः पाठिकाभिस्त दात्वम् ।

शोभाशालिप्रियं **सरिसव**ग्रामरत्नं परीयाः ।।

दत्वा – लिखनार्थमवधेहि ।

नटी – अज्ज कि उण तं ण आणे ।

सूत्र – अज्जे श्रृणु लिखनार्थ पत्रिकायेतां

आयासेन समुद्रमप्य वचिता कष्टाति, कष्टनेयास्रष्टुदग्खिती परैव पितया ।

दृष्ट्रवा कुतो लंघिता ....

End - या ना नागुण पूरिता बहुरसा ....

12. GOVINDA JHA

Govinda Jha was the **Guru** of Ramdasa Jha. He is the author of **Nalacharitanataka**. He was a contemporary of Sundar Thakur. Chanda Jha noticed his works. Probably he is the author of **Govindatattvamimansa**.[75] The **Nalacharita** deals with the story of Nala's exile. The dialogue is in Sanskrit and Prakrit and the songs are in Maithili. Poignant feelings of Damayanti and repentance of Nala are some of the best examples of this drama. The author may be assigned to 17th-18th century AD.[76] He was the author of **Krsnacharita** also. Both these dramas are unpublished.

13. VAMSAMANI JHA[77]

Vamsamani Jha made his mark as a dramatist in the court of Laksminarasimhamalla of Kantipur in Nepal. He was the author of a long **Krsna-**kavya in Sanskrit. He was a great musician and he composed his famous **Sangeeta bhaskara**. He was the author of two dramas, viz., **Muditamadalasa** and **Gitadigambara**.[78] The **Gitadigambara** is a story of love between Siva and Parvati. The drama was composed to entertain the princes and Panditas who had assembled to see the **Tulapurusadana**.[79] It is written in imitation of the inimitable style of the **Gitagovinda** of Jayadeva. It is in four Acts:

Act I – मुदितमहेश

Act II – मानिनीभंग

Act III – विरक्तविरुपाक्ष

Act IV – सकामकामेश्वर

14. RAMDASA JHA

Ramdasa Jha was a disciple of Govinda Jha[80] and a contemporary of Raja Sundara Thakur of Darbhanga. He composed the famous **Anandavijayanataka**.[81] The drama is written in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Maithili. There are in all four Acts:

Act I – एव सोत्कंठ माधवोनाम प्रथमोऽङ्कः

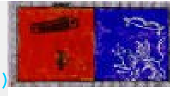
Act II – इति सोत्कंठ माधवोनाम द्वितीयोऽङ्कः ।।

Act III & IV – Nameless.

In Act I, the hero, Madhava, is eager for his beloved when he learns of Radha's beauty from his friend Anandakara. In Act II, Madhava, with the help of his friend, sees Radha. Here the plot has been made a bit interesting. Anandakara, in the guise of an astrologer, Gunanidhana, asks Radha and her friend Vicaksana and Vacala to collect flowers for Siva worship, and while they are busy, both the friends appear.[82] Radha is enchanted to see Madhava. Radha begins worshipping the Lord. She feels the pangs of separation and a Kapalika[83] consoles Radha. The same condition of the hero is described in Act IV and ultimately they are united. There is nothing remarkable in the drama and the whole thing seems to have been a sort of imitation from his predecessors.

15. HARIHAROPADHYAYA

Hariharopadhyaya was one of the famous Sanskrit writers of Mithila. His famous drama is **Bhartriharinirvedam**[84]. In his drama, there is a glorification of the yoga philosophy. It teaches that the **summum bonum** is the discrimination and separation of soul from matter, thus leading through renunciation of the world to isolation of the ego. It has **Santa** for its sentiment, the leading man is the famous ascetic Gorakhanatha, the founder of the Saiva sect and the **Kanaphataka yogi** of the early part



of the 15th century AD. Both Sanskrit and Prakrit have been used.[85] The present work is a drama representing **Santarasa**.[86] It begins with a salutation to Siva. In Act III, we come across with Gorakh. It is a small drama.

Harihara also wrote another drama known as **Prabhavatiparinaya**.[87] It is not published. A short note from the **notices** of R L Mitra[88] is given below:

Beginning - देव्यामानापनोदप्रणतशिवशिरः शीतधाम्नानरवेन्दौ

सम्पूर्ण सैहिकेया कृति कुटिल जटामण्डलाद्धविरुद्द ।

गीवर्णाश्चन्द्र दर्व्य भ्रम चकित हृदोन्यञ्चदेतत् किरीटोत्

संगाद् गंगा प्रवाहे प्रवहति विहितस्नान पुण्याः पुनन्तु ।।

ध्यानावधान परिलङ्घन जागरुकं

शेषानलोन्मथितमन्मथ विग्रहस्य ।

सद्यः प्रबुद्ध करुणा परिणाहदीर्घ

देवस्य पातु परिदेवित मिन्दुमौलैः ।।

नान्द्यते सूत्रधारः । अलमति विस्तरेण । पुरोऽवलोक्य ।

कथमयमशेष भुवन वनिता विधीयमानसायन्तन मंगलदीपिका

सहस्रमकालमेव पूर्वाचल शिखर सौध परिसरे ....

****

एषा तयोः प्रथमजेन निजानुजात

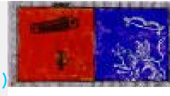
श्री नीलकण्ठ कविकण्ठ विभूषणाय ।

गोविन्दसूनु गुणगुम्फ निषक्त**सूक्ति**

मुक्तावली[89] हरिहरेण चिरेण दीर्णा ।

विषयः – ब्रजलाभसुतया प्रभावत्या सहप्रद्युम्नस्य परिणय वृतान्तमबलम्व्यविरचितमिदं नाटकम् ।

तत्र प्रथमांके – सारण भद्रयोरभिनयेन सुकुमारे कैशोरे वयसि वर्तमाना प्रभावती सह सहचरीभिः भवनदीर्घीकायां ....प्रद्युम्नोऽपि चित्रफलके प्रभावती प्रतिविम्बदर्शनेन ....



द्वितीयांके – प्रभावत्या पूर्वरागवर्णनं ।

तृतीयांके – नटवेशेन प्रद्युम्नस्य व्रजनामपुरप्रयागवर्णनं ।

चतुर्थांके – तत्रतयोरन्योन्यदर्शनं मदनलेख प्रस्थापनञ्च ....कुसुमवाटिकां ....प्रभावत्या भ्रमरवाधनां सूचयन्त्या .....

पंचमांके – उद्यान सौन्दर्य एवं संध्यावर्णनम् ।

षष्ठमांके – नायिकायाः प्रणयमानवर्णनं च ।

सप्तमांके – राजपुरोहितेन सह कञ्चुकिकुब्जयोः संवादेन अन्तःपुर वृतान्तोऽयं ब्रज नलेन परिज्ञातः ।

Such a detailed notice of this **ms** is not there in Jayaswal's Catalogue. Jayaswal's catalogue has:

End - प्रभा – संसभ्रमसुत्थाय प्रणमति इतरेपि यथोचितमाचरन्ति ।

नारद – सानन्दे कुमार प्रद्युम्नः भूयः प्रियं ।

कुमा – अञ्जलिम्बध्वा भगवन् किम परंयस्य ।

Prabhavatiparinaya is a successful drama in seven Acts. Prabhavati develops soft corner for Pradyumna and the latter also feels for the former. It is the image of Prabhavati that impresses Pradyumna in disguise. The description of garden, evening and other natural scene is simply superb. Like all other dramas of the period, the present drama represents a love story though the style is usual.

16. KRSNADATTA MAITHILA[90]

In the long list of dramatists in Mithila, Krsnadatta is one of the loftiest names, who wrote two allegorical **natakas**. He was a well-known scholar of his time. He was the son of Sadarana and Ananda Devi. He hailed from one of the respectable families of Mithila. He had superb scholarly qualities. His genius attracted the notice of Devaji Purushottam, the prime minister of the Bhonslas of Nagpur, who was probably his patron. His two well-known dramas are **Puranjanacharita**[91] and **Kubalayasviyannamanatakam**.[92]

His genius of writing allegorical dramas in lyrical style reminds one of Kalidasa, Bana, Krsnamisra, Jayadeva and others. The **Puranjanacharita** relates the story of Puranjana of the **Bhagavatapurana**[93], though a few new characters have been brought in. The author here extols the cult of Bhakti through this drama, the object of which is to promote devotion to Lord Krsna. In his description of the Dasavatara of Visnu, one is reminded of the marvellous poetic style of Jayadeva.

The **Puranjanacharita**[94] is a short drama in five Acts. It is said to have been staged in the court of Purusottamadeva. This drama is published. Since the edition is based on a single manuscript, the following amendments, on the basis of second **ms**, are necessary. Changes are to be made on pp. 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20, 24, 26, 30.

On page 24, the following sloka is not there in the printed text[95]:

रक्ताक्षोमलिनः पिकोमधुरया वाचा वरं लाघ्यतेऽ

मेध्याशी कटुभाषणोऽपि सुकृताख्यानेन काकोच्यते ।

सुश्लाघ्यो नवलक्षणा प्रणयनादत्यन्त दुष्टोऽप्यसा–

वेकः कोऽपिगुणो विलक्षणतरः स्यात् सर्वदोषापहः ।।

The second drama **Kubalayasviyannamanatakam** is an important contribution of Krsnadatta. The story is based on the **Brahmapurana**. It deals with the story of a Vedic student named Kubalayasva who fell in love with a maiden named Madalasa. The maiden is carried away to the nether regions, whence she is rescued by a king of Kasi and restored to her lover. An entertaining farce, this drama, in seven Acts, relates the romantic tale of Madalasa and Sandrakutuhal. Like other dramatists, he alsobased his accounts on the **Puranas**. This drama is unpublished and a short account of it is given below:

R L Mitra; **Notices** – VII, P.64. Ms No. 2035

(A copy of this drama is deposited in the **Bihar Research Society** Library, Patna.)

Beginning - भालप्रज्ज्वल दक्षिकैतवसती विश्लेषवैश्वानर –

ज्वालावर्तित सौर सैन्धवपयः फेनैक लेखेव या ।

सा गौरी मिलने पुनः पुररिपोः प्रेम प्रदीपंरसं

दातुं रुपाहितेव कलिता चान्द्रीकला पातुवः ।।

(Only first two lines tally with the **ms** noticed by Jayaswal; **Catalogue** – II. 33. No. 32). There is a different reading altogether in the last two lines.

अपिच – श्रुत्वादक्षादलीकं प्रियकलुषमति व्यस्तया सद्यएव, त्यक्ते सत्या स्वदेहे प्रभुरपि न वधूं स्वीचकारांयः । (पराम्बा in Jayaswal) तामेव प्राप्यभूयो नग जननमितामर्द्नारीश्वरोऽभूत (after भूयोधरवरतनयामर्ध in Jayaswal) सप्रेमाद्वैतवादी कलयतु भवतामृद्दिमद्धेन्दुमौलिः।

नान्द्यन्तेसूत्रधारः – अमास्ति विस्तरेण । पुरोऽवलोक्य । कथमयमुदिन एव मधुसमयं हितसमुदितमदनमालवकामिनी कापालफलक कोमलकमनीय कंडलः कनक कुण्डलमाखण्ड ....अखिलजगदानन्दकन्दलश्चन्द्रस्तमेनमभ्युदीयभानमहमभ्यर्थे ....

We get the name of Krsnadatta in the beginning of the drama. There is a difference of reading in the end in the **ms** noticed by R L Mitra and another by Jayaswal. The description about the various Acts in the drama is given here from Mitra's **Notices**:

प्रथमांके – काशीराज प्रतीहारयोरभिनयेन प्रजानां शौख्यवर्णनं । अत्रान्तरे भरद्वास्यं ऋषेरादेश ज्ञापनार्थं सोमशर्मणः प्रावेशिकी ध्रुवा । ततश्चैकेन शिष्येण कुवलयनामात्तनमश्च मनकर्षतानगम्य मानस्यापरेण च दत्त हस्तावलम्बस्य महर्षेर्गालवस्य प्रवेशेन पातालाधिवासिनः पातालकेतोस्तपोवनोपरोध सूचनं ....

द्वितीयाङ्के – समिदाहरणाय नियुक्तस्य पुण्यशीलस्य प्राभातिक तपोवन रमणीयतां वर्णयतो वातस्याय नेन सह संलापेन विश्वासोर्गन्धिर्वराजस्यापहृत्य कुमारी नाम्ना मदालसा समानीता पातालपुरं पातालकेतुनेति सूचनं । कंकालककरालकयोः प्रवेशेन कुमार प्रभाववर्णनं, मध्याह्नवर्णनञ्च । अथ कंकालेन वन्यजन कृषिकौशल प्रदर्शनव्याजेन तपोवनप्रान्तदेशं समुपस्थितं पातालकेतुमुद्दिश्य निष्क्रान्त इति ....

तृतीयाङ्के – मन्दारिका-वृन्दारिकयोः संवादेन मदालसायाः कातर्य्यादिवर्णनं । मदालसायाः प्रवृत्तिमाकलयितुं पातालमुद्दिश्य प्रचलितायाः कुण्डलायाः कुवलयाश्वेन सह संलाप कथनं ....मदालसाया वैचित्र्यवर्णनं ....परिणयवर्णनञ्च ।

चतुर्थांके – काशीराजस्य कुमारकृतपातालकेतु विजयादिवृतान्त श्रवण महोत्सवं ....

पंचमांके – विशेश्वरस्य मंदिर प्रवेशसूचनं ....मदालसया उत्स्वप्रायितं ....

षष्ठांके – युवराजप्राणत्यागवार्ता ....

सप्तमांके – नागकुमारयोरभिनयेन प्रियाविरहविधुरस्य कुवलयाश्वस्य परिदेवनादि कीर्तनं । वटुवेशधारिभ्यां ताभ्यांसह तस्य नागलोकगमन सूचना । अथ विमनाभिताय तस्मै नागराजस्य माया मदालसा प्रदर्शनं । नागराज प्रभावात् तस्य प्रकृतमदालसा सम्मेलनं ।

Both these dramas are in Sanskrit and probably that is the reason why J K Misra has not cared to mention Krsnadatta in his History of Maithili Literature. These two works are invaluable contribution to the storehouse of Sanskrit literature. It is evident that the classical Sanskrit even inspired the writers in so late a period and held the field. Various other works are ascribed to Krsnadatta Maithila. He is said to have written a commentary on the **Gitagovinda**[96] of Jayadeva, known as the **Gangagitagovindavyakhya**. Another commentary on the same work is known as **Ganga** (vide – Jayaswal; op.cit. p.46, No. A). It is said that Krsnadatta received a village, as a grant, from the king of Nepal.[97] Another commentary on the same work by Krsnadatta is known as **Sasilekha**.[98] Two **mss** of this commentary have been noticed, ome at Sukhpur (Saharsa) and the other at Saurath (Darbhanga). It seems that Sri Singh[99] has confused our author with Krsnadatta Upadhyaya. According to the learned scholar, Krsnadatta Upadhyaya is known for several works, viz., **Gitagopipati** and **Chandrikacharita**, a commentary on the **Gitagovinda**, called **Sasilekha** .[100] Though we cannot be sure of all these ascriptions to this man, in the present state of our knowledge, we can say with some amount of certainty that our author was a great scholar of Sanskrit and dramatist.[101]

17. DEVAKINANDANA

The **Janakiparinaya** (unpublished) is another contribution of Mithila towards the development of Sanskrit drama. This **nataka** was composed by Devakinandana (? Or Mukunda). It is deposited in the Raj Library. The authorship of the drama cannot be definitely ascertained. From the **ms**, it appears that

Mukunda was probably the author of this drama. The **ms** is in Maithili character and is in 24 pages. There are six to ten lines in a page. It is written on loose papers. It is in a good state of preservation, complete and correct. The date is missing.

ॐ नमस्तस्यै is written on each page.

Beginning – नमश्शिवाय ।।

नृत्यारम्भेदधानोऽमृतकायशकलंमस्तके मंजुभूषां

भालव्यासक्तवह्विस्सुरुचिररुधिरारक्त कीर्तिंवसानः ।।

भ्राम्यत .....कुलेन्दुस्खलदमृत रस प्राप्त देहा ....

द्रवासानग्नामग्नो विभूत्यै सहसित गिरिजः ।

पातु वो नृत्यति ।।1।।

वर्द्धित धनजन सुखित सुकविगण विद्या वितरण ....भवमय –

सुहरण । सुनमित सुरगण शरणपते ।

लम्बोदर वुधवर गजमुखशावकरज .....

जय जय आशुगते ।। नान्द्यते ----- सूत्रधारः ।

End - अत्राशेषार्थ गीतैनृत्यान्ति मुहुरभिवादयन्तीः

सहसा श्री हनुमान नाटकं नृत्यादिकं । बहुला

दृष्टवातोऽपि सदेस्या सुरसिक्ताः सर्वत्र मैथिलाः

नापठ्य व्यवहार चमत्कारान्न वगम्याति प्रसन्ना

प्रसन्नतमाश्चन्चुः । ....

The drama is in four Acts and deals with the **parinaya** of Janaki. The **ms** is said to have been made ready during the reign of Maharaja Mahesvara Singh (c. 19th century). The author belonged to the 18th century.

18. LALAKAVI

Lalakavi[102] wrote the **Gaurisvayambara** and possibly this is also known as the **Gauriparinaya**. The drama was composed in praise of Lord Siva as will be evident from the following lines:

सूत्रधारः – जगदखण्डमण्डल विरुद्धं दुरितान्धकारि

विसरख प्रचण्ड मार्तण्यस्याहिमगिरि नन्दिनी

वदनसरससारसमकेरन्दास्वादन तदमानो

मिलिन्दस्य करुणा पारावारस्य भगवतः

श्री विश्वेश्वरस्य सरस पद पंकज परायण

मुद्दिश्च ज्योतिर्व्विद **कविलालेन**

श्री **गौरीस्वयम्बर** नाटकमस्ति ।

This Lalakavi is possibly the same as the author of '**Kandarpighata Ka Larai**'. He flourished during the reign of Maharaja Narendrasimha (18th century). Here we find a complete departure from the traditional convention of mixed language. Prakrit and Sanskrit forms are rare here. It is a short play of one Act depicting the story of Gauri's marriage with Siva.

19. RAMAPATI UPADHYAYA

Ramapati Upadhyaya flourished in the 18th century, His famous drama is known as **Rukminiharana** (or **Rukminisvayambara**). The story of this drama is based on the **Harivamsa** (47.60) and the **Bhagavatapurana** (X.52; 54). The play is in mixed language and has got six Acts. It is avery interesting drama where Siva has been painted as the lord of **Nrtya** (or dance). Generally the **Harivamsa** tradition has been followed here with slight variations. In Act I, it is decided to hold a **Svayambara** for Rukmini.

In Act II, Krsna and Sisupala are proposed as grooms. When Rukmini speaks against Krsna for his association with Gopis, the king defends Krsna in the following words:

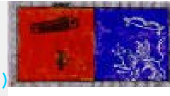
गोपास्ते दिव्य देहाः सकृत वहुयुतो नन्द गोपः प्रजेशो ।

गोप्यस्तास्चाप सरोऽशत्रि (दव्र) ज भूवि जनतादेव राजानुमत्या ।।

कंसोऽरिष्टश्च दैत्यः कपट धृत तनुष्पूतना वालहन्त्री ।

येस्मिन्दोषास्त्वयोक्तास्त्रिभुवनमहिते माधवे ते गुणास्युः ।।

Ultimately it was decided to hold a **Svayambara**. In Act III, when the messenger delivers an invitation to Krsna, he appears. There is nothing remarkable in Act IV. Again in Act V, Krsna's diplomatic behaviour makes Rukmini uneasy. Then Narada appears and advises Krsna to elope Rukmini. The whole thing



became known. The situation was not tolerated by the **Yuvaraja** and there begins a fight with Krsna. In conformity with the tradition of Sanskrit drama, the actual fight is not shown, but described. On the whole, it is a successful drama though the vigour of the classical age is wanting. Besides the dramatic qualities of this play, the most important point here is the concept of Indian nationalism preserved in a song, in connection with the **Svayambara** of Rukmini. It is interesting to find out that as late as the 18th century, when India was torn by internal strife, the concept of India as a whole was not forgotten. An ordinary dramatist has given a description of this vast country in the following manner[103]:

हे द्विज करिअ हमर उपकार ।

ई सबे **जनपद** तोरित गमन कए न्योंतिअ भूप कुमार ।। ध्रुवम् ।।

अंग, वंग, गुजरात, ओइरसा कस्तर **कच्छ कलिङ्ग** ।

द्राविड़, मरहट, केरल, सोरठ, कारनाट, तैलंग ।।

देश **रतनपुर** अओर **नागपुर मालव कटक असाम**

देओगढ़ गाढ़ा नगरी बाढ़ा **राजमहल** सुखधाम ।।

मगहमलापुर अओर **भोजपुर** देश सरै सवेसार

वेतियावासी नगरी **कासी** जे थिक त्रिभुवन क सार ।।

अन्तरवेग (?) **प्रयाग** मनोहर **मथुरा,** गुणक निधान ।

अओध कन्नओज नगर कुम्मचिल ओएल के नहिं जान ।।

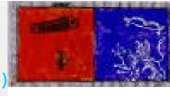
नगरकीट श्रीनगर उजागर **मोरंग चीन नेपाल**

मारुआर हस्तिनापुर जयपुर पाटलिपुत्र सुविशाल ।।

मध्यभूमि **मिथिला** अतिसुन्दर ।

जनक महीपति देस

आगम निगम पुराण विवेचन



द्विजगण करि अवधान ।।

रुकुमिनि कुमरि स्वयम्बर कारने

सुमति रमापति भान ।।

20. HARSANATHA

Harsanatha[104] was an important dramatist of Mithila. He flourished in the 19th century. He wrote **Usaharananataka** in mixed Sanskrit and Maithili. It is a published work and deals with the conventional story. His Maithili lyrics are marvellous. His other important work is **Madhavanandanataka** in five Acts. The plot of **Usaharana** is more or less the same as of Ratnapani's drama of the same name, though there is a slight difference in the sense that Chitralekha does not seek Narada's help here. **Usaharana** is in five Acts. The author indulges in erotic songs in Act III. **Madhavananda** is based on the **Bhagavata**. The treatment of the subject matter in the drama is graceful.

21. GOKULANATHA UPADHYAYA

Gokulanatha is one of the most renowned dramatists of Mithila. Following the footsteps of Krsnamisra and Krsnadatta, Gokulanatha succeeded in bringing a successful allegorical drama. He has expounded therein the Nyaya system of philosophy. The **Amrtodayanataka** is in five acts. The language is Sanskrit and Prakrit. It begins with the **Nandipatha** and then the **Sutradhara** appears. There are three slokas in the **Nandi**. The **Prastavana** is as follows:

इतिसाधनचतुष्टय संधानिनाम प्रस्तावना–

Act I – is called श्रवणसम्पति. There appears आन्वीक्षकी and श्रुतिः.

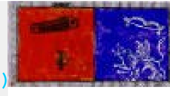
Act II – is called मननसिद्धिः. Here we find कंचुकी, चेटी, मिश्र विषकुम्भक, कथा, पक्षता विदूषक and परामर्षः.

Act III – is called निदिध्यासन धर्मसंयत. Here we come across निर्वेद and श्रद्धा, विविदिषा, विषकम्भक, पतञ्जलि, महाव्रत, कापालिक, जावालिः and निर्जरः.

Act IV – is called तुरीयोऽयमात्मदर्शनं-पुरुष and पुरुषोत्तम appear here.

Act V – is called अपवर्गप्रतिष्ठा. It begins with श्रुतिः and आन्वीक्षकी and there are many others here बुद्धमार्ग, मार्ग, आत्मसिद्धान्त, अर्हसिद्धान्त, सिद्धान्त, पाशुपत सिद्धान्त, वैष्णवसिद्धान्त, कर्मकाण्डः, मीमांसाद्वयम्, ब्रह्मविद्या, सांख्ययोगौ, अपवर्ग and सरस्वती ।

Though a very small play, almost all the important points of Indian philosophy have been touched here with success. The author seems to have been well conversant with different systems of thought. Even as late as the 18th-19th century of our era, the antipathy towards **Buddhism, Jainism, Kapalikas** and other heretical sects was marked and in this direction Gokulanatha was only following the conservative



tradition of Mithila. Buddhism and other heretical sects were no problems in his days. The reference to these sects is only casual in so far as the reputation of their views is concerned. No other importance should be attached to these casual references. There is no room for any doubt that he wrote this drama simply to establish the claim and assert the superiority of **Nyaya** system over others and thereby to put off the views of the heretical sects. The **Amrtodaya** treats the story of **Jivatma** from creation to annihilation.[105]

It is said that at the instance of Fateh Shah[106], Gokulanatha composed **Ekavali**. Besides a glss of the **Kavyaprakasa** and the poem **Sivastuti**, he also wrote a drama, entitled **Muditamadalasa**, in seven Acts. It deals with the marriage of Madalasa, daughter of Visvavasu and Kubalayasva. He was an eminent writer on **Smrti** and wrote about 24 books on the subject. He is said to have founded an image of **Gauridigambara** at Hajipur.

MISCELLANEOUS

There are many more dramas about which we have little or practically no information for the present. Even, Jayaswal's list is not complete. Though no technical literature on dramaturgy was written in Mithila after Abhinavagupta, the dramas continued to be written throughout. These dramas are not without merit. The dramatic literature, to a great extent, dominated the field of Sanskrit learning. Even when dramaturgy was ignored, dramas were written and staged. Only one book of importance in the field of dramaturgy merits notice here and that is the **Srihastamuktavali** of Subhankara Thakur. It is an **Abhinaya** work and deals with the different poses of hands and figures. It is based on other older works of dramaturgy. A commentary on it was written in 1675 AD.[107]

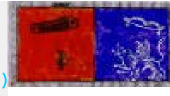
The **Jayaratnakara** by Saktiballabha was written in 1714 Saka for the Nepal king Ranabahadura Shah, **parvatachakravartin**. The drama deals with the history of the dynasty.[108] The **Mahanatakam** by Hanuman deals with **Ramacharita**. The date in all the available manuscripts is missing. It is said to have been compiled by one Madhusudana Misra (Vide, Jayaswal; op.cit. pp. 110-1, No. 106, 107, 108; CC 1.438; II.100, 216; **Notices** – V.27). There is another drama entitled **Ramacharitavarnana** by Hanuman. The **Prabhavatiharana**, a published drama in four Acts, of Bhanunath is another milestone in the history of Sanskrit literature in Mithila. The **Sasikalaparinaya** was composed in five Acts in the second quarter of our century. It was published by the Raj Press, Darbhanga. The author, Sri Riddhinatha Jha, has used only Sanskrit.

The **Gajananacharita**[109] by Sivanandana Misra is yet to be published. It is written in Maithili character on a white brown paper in a book form. There are in all 25 folios with lines 12 to 14 on each page. The drama is in seven Acts. The date is mentioned. It deals with the **Virarasa**.

Beginning – गजानन चरितम्

कन्याम्भोदपनिद्द पंकज वनानन्दाभयो लम्बितम् ।

विश्वक् स्रंस जटा कला पविहितम्बिभ्राणामीशालम् ।।



अन्तः स्नेहविनीतशैलसुतया साकूतमालोकितम् ।

सान्दानन्दनिकामजात पुलकं पायादपायाद् ध्रुवम् ।।

In the **Nandisutra** it refers to one Netresvara Simha and Janesvara Simha.

End – लोकाधर्म्मरतास्सन्तु काले वर्षन्तु तोयदाः

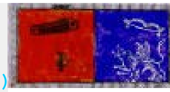
शाल्यैपुर्णास्तु पृथ्वी नित्योत्सवरताः प्रजाः ।।

Thus, a brief survey of the dramas given above shows that the tradition of writing Sanskrit dramas continued unabated as late as our own century. There are various other authors whose works have not yet come to light. The **Mithilanka** has catalogued a long list of dramatists. A short account of the Sanskrit dramatists of Mithila has been published by Sri Umakant Thakur in the **Vaidehi Visesanka** of 1957. In this connection, Raghunandanadasa's '**Mithilanataka**' also deserves mention. The unbroken continuity of Sanskrit literature in Mithila is well illustrated by these facts. A critical literary evaluation of all these dramas is yet a desideratum.

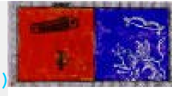
Besides the list, given above, the Maithila scholars claim Kalidasa, Rajashekhara, Bhavabhuti and Jayadeva and others of repute as their own. To me, it seems that these claims are baseless. There have been various authors of the same name and that probably is responsible for such identification. Whether or not these dramatists and poets belonged to Mithila, the fact remains that they are our national poets and their heritage is ours. The study of their works was pursued with same sincerity of purpose as of any other Maithila scholar here and that is evident from the number of commentaries written thereon Mithila. It is futile to fight over the question of their nationality.

SANSKRIT DRAMATISTS OF MITHILA

Sr.No.	Name of the author	Approximate date	Works	Remarks
1.	Murari Misra	9th Century AD	**Anargharaghava**	Published
2.	Krsna Misra	11th Century AD	**Prabodhachandrodaya**	Do
3.	Abhinavagupta	11-12th Century AD	Wrote a commentary on **Natyasastra**	
4.	Jyotirisvara Thakur	14th Century AD	**Dhurtasamagama**	Published
5.	Umapati	Do	**Parijataharana**	Do
6.	Manika	Do	**Bhairavanandananataka**	Unpublished
7.	Vidyapati Thakur	Do	(a) **Goraksavijaya**	Published
			(b) **Manimajari**	Do



8.	Jayadeva Misra	15th Century AD	**Prasannaraghava**	Do
9.	Banakavi	Do	**Parvatiparinaya**	(?)
10.	Sankara Misra	Do	(a) **Srikrisnavinodanataka**	Published
			(b) **Manobhavaparabhava**	Do
11.	Devananda	16th Century AD	**Usaharananataka**	(?)
12.	Govinda Jha	17th Century AD	(a) **Nalacharita**	Unpublished
			(b) **Krsnacharita**	Do
13.	Vamsamani Jha	Do	**Gitadigambara**	Do
14.	Ramadasa Jha	Do	**Anandavijayanataka**	Published
15.	Hariharopadhyaya	18th Century AD	(a) **Bhatrharinirveda**	Do
			(b) **Prabhavatiparinaya**	Unpublished
16.	Krsnadatta Maithila	Do	(a) **Puranjanacharita**	Published
			(b) **Kuvalayasviyanataka**	Unpublished
17.	Devakinandana	Do	**Janakiparinaya**	Do
18.	Lalakavi	Do	(a) **Gauriparinaya**	Do (?)
			(b) **Gaurisvayambara**	Do
19.	Ramapati	Do	**Rukminisvayambara**	Do
20.	Harsanatha	19th Century AD	(a) **Usaharana**	Published
			(b) **Madhavananda**	
21.	Gokulanath	Do	**Amrtodaya**	(?)



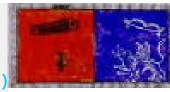
CHAPTER XXI

CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MITHILA

I

Mithila, the land of hoary antiquity, is one of the earliest centres of civilisation in the east, particularly in the field of Vedic culture. Even prior to its Aryanisation, it had its own history about which we have hardly any plausible source of information but a critical anthropological and ethnological review of the geographical limits of this ancient land reveals to us a picture worthy of examination. The recent excavations at Chirand have proved the fact, beyond any shadow of doubt, that North Bihar had achieved great cultural heights in the pre-historic period and it had a place of pride among the various cultural centres in the Neolithic phase. Even before the emergence of the Aryans on the scene, Mithila had wide contacts and it seems that the Kiratas and a number of other tribes had extended their sway over the northern part of Videha.

Rome was not built in a day so goes the adage and in that very sense we can say that the Mithila of Janaka was not a sudden phenomenon in the history of eastern India, rather it took centuries to build a pattern of culture out of which emerged the facets of cultural life in a varied colour. The Janaka period of Videha’s history presupposes a long cultural continuity and tradition and in the absence of any archaeological evidence, we can simply surmise or hazard a conjecture that Videha had developed as an important centre of trade and cultural link since time immemorial. The geographical settings had given it

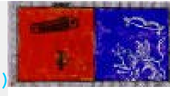


a peculiar place and naturally the development of a varied culture in this area had a lasting impact on Indian culture as a whole.

The intermingling of different races and culture gave rise to a certain composite type with more or less common characteristics. The northern and north-eastern part of India had some earliest contacts with the austro-dravidian elements and according to S K Chatterji, 'the earliest types of cultural assimilation went hand in hand with a large amount of racial fusion ....and some of the fundamental things in Brahmanical Hinduism like the worship of Siva and Uma, of Visnu and Sri and the Yoga philosophy and practice came from the Dravidian speakers.'[1] Parts of north Bihar had been associated with the Kirata culture, that is, the non-aryan culture. In our estimate of the cultural heritage of Mithila, we have to take into account the earliest references to the Kiratas, believed to have been the non-aryan tribes presiding over the destiny of the Terai region of Videha prior to its aryanisation. Kiratas are mentioned in the Vedic literature, **Mahabharata** (standing at the confluence of the cultural synthesis through the ages) and other contemporary literature. A Kirata is mentioned in connection with the **Purusamedha** sacrifice[2] and in the **Atharvaveda**[3], a Kirata is associated with the mountain. Manu[4] regards Kirata as a degraded Ksatriya. Mahadeva is associated with the Kiratas in the **Mahabharata** and Bhima meets the Kiratas in the east of Videha. He is credited with having defeated seven of the Kirata rulers. There is already a **Kirataparva** section in the **Vanaparva** of the **Mahabharata**, where the Kiratas are described as of yellow colour and even Siva once takes the form of Kirata.

The Kiratas are associated with the foreign people like Yavanas, Sakas, Pahlavas and the Chinese in the **Mahabharata** and also by Sylvain Levy. Their golden colour is also attested to in the **Ramayana** and they are described as ferocious and raw fish-eaters. In the **Visnupurana**, the Kiratas are placed in the east. Here we are not in a position to assess critically the origin and development of the Kirata culture in India in the present state of our knowledge but what emerges out of our study of the ancient texts is that they contributed a good deal to the development of a composite culture in the Videha region in earliest period. The precise features of the pre-Vedic cults are difficult to determine. Some distinctive forms of the non-aryans were added into the Vedic pantheon. The Kiratas lived on the Himalayan slopes and in the mountains of the east. Since we find their mention in the Vedic literature, it appears fair to conclude that by that time they had mingled with the Aryans and had influenced their culture to a great extent. So far as Videha is concerned, they were undoubtedly the most prominent actors on the scene and were the fore-runners of trade and culture between China and north-eastern India through Nepal and they were also the carriers of culture on both sides of the Himalayas.

Mithila is really proud of her glorious past. According to the Puranic tradition, the city of Mithila was founded and named after the region had been conquered and colonised by the followers of Videgha Mathava. According to Monier-Williams, Videha indicated the whole country and Mithila applied to the capital city but ultimately Mithila replaced Videha as name of the territory. Before the coming of the Aryans, the Videhas seem to have been connected with walls and ramparts like other pre-aryan peoples. Videgha Mathava was an invader from the west who destroyed the walls and ramparts of the Videhas to the east of river Sadanira and subdued them. The old names like Videha, Mithila and Tirabhukti have persisted to this day.



We have a list of twelve names in the **Mithilakhanda** of the **Brhadvisnupurana**[5]. Mithila appears to have been excluded from the four ancient sacred divisions of the country, viz., Brahmavarta, Brahmarsidesa, Madhyadesa and Aryavarta. Mithila acquired sanctity only from the fact that there roamed about a black antelope in this region.[6] Mithila was considered an important part of the Prachyadesa. Prachi in the ancient Tibetan geography included Mithila and Anga.[7] Jalodhava of the **Mahabharata** is identified with Mithila. The province of Tirabhukti includes Videha, Mithila and Vaisali. The geographical factors had made it a tract too proud to admit other nationalities to intercourse on equal terms, and the region has passed through conquests after conquests, from north, south, east and west, without changing its ancestral peculiarities. The Maithilas are extraordinarily devoted to 'mint, amice, cumin of the Brahmanical law in their way of everyday life' and according to Vidyapati, the people of Tirhut are by their nature proud of their merits.[8]

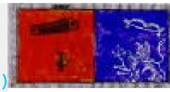
On account of the geographical factors and the existence of a large number of rivers and rivulets, all weather communications are open only for a few months even today in a major part of Mithila. Besides these geographical factors, extraordinary devotion to traditional learning has been responsible for the orthodoxy and conservatism of the Maithilas in day to day life. That is why they have remained static for a long time. They have guarded their teachings with extreme jealousy and that led to the growth of institutions like **Sarayantra** and **Salakapariksa**.[9] Even the first verse taught to a child in Mithila is in praise of Sakti. **Anji** and **Paga** (the national headgear of Mithila) are tantric in character and expression.[10]

II

Mithila made a notable contribution to the development of Upanisadic ideas and philosophy.[11] The Maithilas made a radical departure from the accepted notions of the Vedic rituals and paved the way for the Jainas and the Buddhists in emphasising on austerities. Videha, the centre of Upanisadic culture, played an important part in the development of this aspect of rationalism. The traditional notion about the infallibility of the Vedas did not find favour with the thinkers of the **Upanisads**. We have in the **Mundakopanisad** (1.2.7) the following assertion: "But frail, in truth, are those boats, the sacrifices ....Fools who praise this as the highest good are subject again and again to old age and death."

Yajnavalkya told Gargi, "Whatever, O Gargi, without knowing that imperishable (**Aksara**) offers oblations in the world, sacrifices and penance for a thousand years, his work will have an end. Who-so-ever, O Gargi, without knowing this imperishable departs this world, he is miserable (like a slave). Be he, O Gargi, who departs this world, knowing this imperishable, he is '**Brahman**'." (**Brhadaranyaka Upanisad**. III.8.10)

By breaking off the orthodox Vedic tradition of **Yajna** and **Tapas**, Videhas took the lead in emphasising the other means of salvation, **that is**, the knowledge of the Absolute. The **Bhagavatapurana** has rightly pointed out that 'Maithilas are adept in the true knowledge of the self. ....They are true to the philosophical ideals of being beyond good and evil in their own homes.' The **Upanisadas** constitute the highest level of intellectual attainments and mark the cultural attainment of a very high order in Mithila.

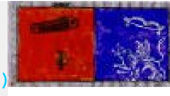


There are conflicting evidences about Janka-Yajnavalkya relationship. Janaka, Gargi and Artabhaga are described as pupils of Yajnavalkya. It has to be borne in mind that formal pupilage was not necessary in the early period. Maitreyi (Yajnavalkya's wife), Artabhaga and Gargi were not exactly pupils of Yajnavalkya in strictest sense of the term. In those days of intellectual curiosity, distinguished scholars were encouraged to become regular teachers. We know that Janaka Videha met some wandering Brahmanas like Svetaketu, Aruneya, Somasusma, Satyayajna, Yajnavalkya etc., whom he asked about the offering of the **Agnihotra** oblation. Though Yajnavalkya, in his own, gave satisfactory answer yet it contained some flaws in the opinion of Janaka who pointed them out and himself explained the offering of **Agnihotra**. He, then, put questions to Yajnavalkya and thenceforward he became a **Brahmana** or **Brahmanistha**, having the knowledge of **Brahma**. Janaka taught Yajnavalkya, Pratardana and others[12] and thereby established the supremacy of the Ksatriyas in the realm of knowledge and philosophy.

Through a long line of Janakas, Mithila became an important seat of culture in the whole of Prachyadesa. For the attainment of the true knowledge of **Brahma**, the Janakas had consulted teachers like Barku, Jitvan, Sakalya Udanka, Gardhavivipita and various others. From the point of view of eminence, they were matchless in their own fields. From different sources we learn that Artabhaga, Bhujya Lahyayana, Usasta Chakrayana, Kahoda Kausitakeya, Uddalaka Aruni, Asvala, Jaratakarava, and various others graced the court of Janaka[13] whose generosity was a constant source of disappointment to Ajatasatru of Kasi. Janaka justified his title of Videha by his offer of his entire kingdom to Yajnavalkya. It was Janaka who laid stress on knowledge and opposed sacrifices and rituals. The rigid form of religious sacrifices evoked a great protest even among the followers of Brahmanism and that led to a revolt against 'formalism and exclusiveness of the Brahmanical system.'[14] Janaka Videha even refused to submit to the hierarchical pretensions of the Brahmanas and asserted his right of performing sacrifices without the intervention of priests. This assertion of Janaka heralded a glorious chapter in the annals of Mithila, and in this respect, her contribution to the development of a distinct Maithila cultue, as distinct and different from the Kuru-Panchal culture of the west, is really outstanding. Janaka's stoical nature is fully borne out by his famous saying: '....in this blazing city of Mithila, nothing of mine is burning.' According to A L Basham, at the root of the growth of asceticism 'lay not only a dissatisfaction with the sacrificial cult but a deep psychological uneasiness which was caused by the feeling of insecurity due to the break-up of the tribal units which had so far given the people a sense of solidarity.'

Yajnavalkya means one who promulgates sacrifices.[15] He had two wives, viz., Maitreyi and Katyayani and a son named Naciketa by the latter. He held liberal views and advocated the eating of tender cows and oxen.[16] He is called **Yogisvara** and it has been held that the 'doctrines promulgated by Yajnavalkya in the **Brh.Upanisad** are in fact completely Buddhistic.'[17] By the time of the Upanisads, we come across a good number of wandering teachers, viz., Gotam, Kapila, Bibhandaka, Satananda, Rsisringa, Vedavati, etc., who had begun to expound new ideas on everything including Vedic rituals and sacrifices. The rigidness and complexities of the earlier period had by then slackened and the **Jatakas** show that the priestly class had lost its authorities.[18] In his teachings to Maityeyi, Yajnavalkya has enunciated the principles of **Advaita**.

The precise nature of the non-Vedic worship is not exactly known. Mahadeva (Siva) was certainly a non-Vedic deity. The presence of the bow of Siva in the palace of Mithila from the time of king Devavrata to

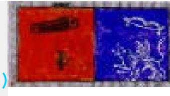


that of Janaka is not quite accidental. It suggests that once upon a time Janaka's ancestors (the original occupants of the land) were Siva worshippers or had accepted Siva worship which was then current in the area as the prominent pre-Vedic religious cult. It was in fact an ancient local cult which the Ramayana mentions as **Dhanurmahayajna**. It has been held that Rama's breaking of Siva's bow and his victory over Parasurama succeeded in ousting non-Vedic Saivism[19] which reigned in Mithila for a prolonged period. To me, it seems that the conclusion is wide of the mark and after going through the available evidences, we have arrived at the following conclusion.

When Janaka dynasty began to rule, the Kiratas were holding sway over a major part of Videha. Naturally therefore and in keeping with the age-old customs and traditions, the Janakas respected the old cultural beliefs and practices of his conquered subjects including the Kiratas who were Saivas. As we have seen above, the Janakas were not orthodox followers of the Vedic customs rather they had brought about radical changes therein. The political expediency might have demanded a change not only in religious and philosophical outlook but also in cultural field and by adopting the existing customs of the vanquished Kiratas, the Janakas might have paved the way for cultural assimilation. Hence in view of these facts, we are in a position to state categorically that Siva had come to be recognised as a most powerful deity by the time Rama had emerged on the scene and the fusion between the Aryan and non-aryan religious concepts had consummated. It must be asserted that the breaking of Siva's bow did not mark the ousting of the non-Vedic Saivism, rather it marked the beginning of a further step in the process of cultural assimilation which began with the dawn of civilisation. Rama, himself, worshipped Siva before embarking on his expedition against Ravana.

Janaka's movement in the realm of thought was no doubt a revolutionary one from the contemporary philosophical point of view. He made a sharp break with the past on ideological plane. He was a symbol of **Jiavanamukti**, completely unattached like the lotus leaf, and was regarded as an emblem of perfect wisdom. He represented a synthesis of **Jnana, Karma, Sanyas** and **Garhasthya** as is evident from the **Devibhagavata** and **Srimadbhagavata**. Yajnavalkya, in course of his instruction to his wife, said, "It is the self for whose sake everything else in the world is dear to all – that self ought to be seen, heard of, contemplated and realised." The emphasis on the introspective self – analysis formed the basis of philosophy in Mithila and the detachment from worldly objects became a prominent feature of Maithila character as is exemplified by the life of the most illustrious son of Mithila, Bhavanatha Misra Ayachi of Sarsopahi. The concept of **Jivanamukta** has since been inspiring the life of the eminent Maithilas. In Maithila homes for generations, two seemingly contradictory environments could prevail simultaneously – the scholar husband dedicated to the pursuit of metaphysical knowledge and the gay and lively maidens singing uninhibited songs, paintings on the walls of **Kohbara** and decking themselves out in attractive make-up and clothes. The story of Vacaspati and Bhamati is quite current even today in Mithila as the ideal husband and wife. The comparison of lotus leaf with the concept of **Jivanamukti** is a point to reckon with in so far as Mithila is concerned. Lotus came to be an integral part of Maithila culture as is evident from the writings of Vidyapati.[20] He expressed both the lust for life and the spirit of denial and devotion. He also treated lotus as of special significance in the study of Maithila culture.[21]

III

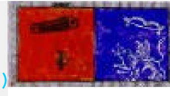


Keeping with the tradition of Janaka and Yajnavalkya, Mithila's contribution to the realm of philosophy, **Nyaya** and **Mimansa** is unique. It has been rightly held that Mithila contributed to the intellectual aspects of Hinduism. The rise of **Nyaya-Vaisesika**, as forming part of one discipline, presupposes a long previous development of philosophical thought. **Vaisesika** and **Nyaya** form a closely connected pair. The **Vaisesika** system aimed at attaining a comprehensive philosophical view whereas **Nyaya** constituted a detailed and acute exposition of formal logic. The **Nyaya-Vaisesika** system is satisfied with pointing out the means of salvation as consisting in correct knowledge. This system admits of nothing invisible or transcendent (**Avyakta**). The system did not originally accept the existence of god and expounded the theory that salvation depended on a correct knowledge of things. Late on, with the rise of **Navya-Nyaya** (amalgam of **Nyaya** and **Vaisesika**), the system became theistic in nature as is evident from Udayana's **Kusumanjali**. This became necessary because Mithila protected orthodox culture from the onslaughts of all heterodox schools of thought. Janaka, Yajnavalkya and Gotam came to be replaced by Mandana, Vacaspati and Udayana. Vatsayana write his **Bhasya** on **Nyayasutra**. Udyotakara wrote his **Vartika** on **Bhasya** and Vacaspati not only elaborated the concept of **Vartika** but also defended them against the Buddhist attack. He has defended Udyaotkara against Dignag. Vacaspati was the master of all the six systems of Indian philosophy and he laid the foundation of the Mithila School of Philosophy on the basis of which later writers succeeded in refuting the Buddhists. Samkara had given a crushing defeat to the heterodox schools of thought both on ideological and metaphysical plane. Samkara succeeded in reviving Hinduism on a sound basis.

In Mithila trinitarianism now formed the basis of Hinduism. It consisted of **Brahma, Visnu** and **Mahesa** and in course of time **Brahma** came to be relegated to the background. Gradually, the harmonising effect of this trinitarianism was seen in the growth of **Saivism, Vaisnavism** and **Saktism**. Though Samkara fought the battle on ideological plane, it was left to Vacaspati to put it on a more secure philosophical basis against the attacks of Buddhism. Udayana defended the case against the Buddhists and succeeded in refuting not only their no-soul theory but also in ably expounding the principles of Theism. Long before the problem of induction in Logic attracted the attention of western logicians, Gangesa (founder of **Navya-Nyaya**) shifted his emphasis from Ontology to Epistemology and the system continued to be cultivated by scholars like Vardhamana, Paksadhara, Vasudeva, Samkara Misra[22], Vacaspati (II) and others. Even Lakhima is said to have written a treatise on **Navya-Nyaya** entitled **Padartha-Chandra**.

In the field of **Mimamsa**, Mithila's contribution is unique and we see that its study was at its peak in the 8th-9th century AD. The credit for its rejuvenation goes to Kumarilabhatta who re-established the supremacy of **Karmakanda** by vigorously defending it against the Buddhists. Mandana Misra, said to be belonging to Mahisi (Saharasa), was not only the **bhaginipati** of Kumarila but also his disciple. Mandana was a great supporter of Vedic **Karmakand**. His wife, Bharati, presided over the intellectual debate between her husband and Samkara and thereby made her mark as a scholar of eminence by ruling in favour of the monistic **Vedanta** of Samkara. Prabhakara, a classmate of Mandana, made a marked departure from the position held by Kumarila and a third school of **Mimamsa** was started by Murari.

Kumarila was the founder of the **Bhattamata**. He propounded that **mimamsa** was based upon the Vedas, upon ordinary experience and also upon direct perception and inference based upon these. It



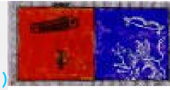
has been reared up by an unbroken line of scientific teachers.[23] Various commentaries on the works of Kumarila (viz., **Tantravartika, Tuptika** and **Slokavartika**) have been written by a number of scholars. Mandan carried the point further in his **Naiskarmasiddhi**. He was the propagator of Kumarila's views and in doing so he wrote a commentary on **Tantravartika**. In his **Vidhi-Viveka**, Mandana refutes the **Bhatta** and the **Gurumata** and in his **Sphotasiddhi** he has criticised the views of his **Guru**. As a great Vedantist, he wrote **Brahmasiddhi**, a masterpiece in history of Vedanta philosophy. Prabhakar was the founder of **Gurumata** and the **Brhati** forms the basis of his school. Murari Misra was the founder of **Misramata**. He held independent views on the theory of the validity of knowledge. The **Mimamsakas** support **Svatahpramanya** (self-validity) and the **Naiyayikas** support **Paratahpramanya**. Prabhakara supports the former. Kumarila somewhat differs from him and Murari suggests new theory nearer to the **Nyaya** system.

In the long list of thinkers, Vacaspati stands pre-eminent. His matchless work **Bhamati** (possibly named after his wife) refers to the Buddhist doctrine of **Pratitya Samutpada** and gives a fitting reply to it. He was the saviour of Hinduism in Mithila. It has been rightly observed that 'every system of Indian philosophy[24]....owes a deep debt to Vacaspati.'

From the religious point of view, Mithila has been the centre of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism and various other cults since time immemorial. It has to be stressed in the beginning that high philosophical discussions and the subtleties of religious thinking were the pastimes of the rulers, princes and courtiers and the common man had neither the leisure nor the required intellectual attainment to indulge in such luxuries. Abstract theories had no meaning for them since they were involved in their day to day struggle for existence. The 'dissent' as revealed in the **Upanisads** might have worked as seeds for the heretics of the future – say of the sixth century BC. Voices of protest are seen in the **Upanisads** and Mithila played no mean part in it. The ruling nobility refused to submit to the Brahmanas and insisted on the primacy of knowledge of **Brahma** and **Atman**. The rise of Jainism and Buddhism gave a further jolt. The wide impact of these two religious systems is a lasting contribution and a priceless heritage of Mithila. The two systems rose as a reaction against Brahmanical rituals and may be termed as a Ksatriya protest against Brahmanism – a pace already set earlier by Janaka. These two heretical systems rejected Veda's claim to infallibility and the caste-system as well. Vaisali used to be a stronghold of Jainism while being looked upon by the Buddhists as a seminary of heresies and dissent.

All the divergent religious systems and sects flourished side by side in Mithila. Buddhism created a new sense of reality and left its indelible mark on the cultural heritage of North Bihar. The idea of revolt in the **Upanisads** germinated through centuries and burst forth in a new form in Buddhism which marked a leap forward in the realm of speculative thought signifying the ethics of a new religion. The Buddhist upsurge affected the people of Mithila and its impact on the life of the people of this region can be seen even today in the field of Tantric religion and thought.

The main aim of the Tantrics was the sublimation through rituals and symbolism. The sixty-four **Tantras** are divided into three main groups and they relate to the technique of worship, psychic subjects and occult phenomenon. Tantricism came to be treated as a system of thought and action with certain philosophical background. Tantric rituals came to be analysed philosophically. Tantric **Sadhana** was

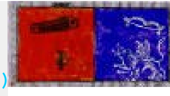


practised at various centres. The Tantric rituals laid stress on five elements known as **Panchamakaras, viz., Madya** (wine), **Mamsa** (meat), **Matsya** (fish), **Mudra** (parched grain) and **Maithuna** (sexual intercourse). **Chakrapuja** is confined to the **Vamachari** tantrics. It consists of a mass of promiscuous gathering of the votaries of both sexes at midnight round a circle or **chakra**.

Tantra was widely practised in Mithila when Ramasimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty was ruling. The Tibetan traveller, Dharmaswami, bears witness to it. Ramasimha, though a typical Hindu, had offered the post of Royal Chaplain to Buddhist Dharmaswami, who, on various grounds refused the offer with thanks. He saw the charms and miracles of Maithila tantras at his court. Narasimha Thakur was the author of a Tantric work entitled **Tarabhaktisudharnava**. He has enumerated various types of women required for the purpose, viz., **Nattis** (actress), **Kapalikas** (nuns wearing necklaces of skulls), **Vesyas** (prostitutes), **Dhobinas** (washerwomen), **Napita** (barber), **Brahmani, Sudra, Gowar, Malini** (gardener), etc. He has further given details about the **Cittasadhana**. These practices have been disowned by the **Daksinacharis**. Most of the Maithila Tantric **Sadhakas** were followers of **Daksinamarga**, based on pure yogic practices as opposed to the **Vamamarga**. The above mentioned work of Narasimha Thakur deals with the worship of various forms of **Sakti** including **Tara**. The **Kalibhaktisudharnava** of the same author (being Chapter XI of the above mentioned work and as preserved in the Mithila Institute, Darbhanga) deals with the daily worship of Kali. Both **Kali** and **Tara** are believed to be identical. Narasimha Thakur has quoted from two hundred and sixty authors. Vidyapati is also credited with having compiled a Tantric work **Agamadwaitanirnaya**. Famous Tantric works like **Sardatilaka** (a commentary on **Tantrapradipa**), **Sadhakamandana** (by Chudamani) and **Bhawanibhaktaimodika** etc., were written and compiled. These works belong to the **Vamamarga**. It has been held that the **Tantras** are meant for the Kali age and for the low class people.

The impact of Tantricism on Maithila society is so great that no aspect of daily life is free from it. Even the Maithili script and headgear are believed to have originated out of Tantric influence. It would not be out of place to give an introduction of the famous Maithila Tantric Ghanananda Das. He was a **Siddha** tantric known all over India and a south Indian Tantric came to seek his advice on certain technical matters and returned satisfied. His contribution in the field of **Tantra** was unique and he was a well-known man in his time as we know that southerners had heard his name in the Vindhya mountain region. His writings are yet to be studied on scientific lines. His two known important works are: i) **Matanga-Kusumanjali** and ii) **Mantrakalpadruma**. Ghanananda[25] was the son of Umanatha Vaiyakarana. Mithila is full of Tantric centres even today and during the **Navaratri** festival, these centres attract large gatherings. **Mahachinatara**, **Manasa**, **Tara**, **Chinnamasta**, **Mahisasuramardini**, etc., were borrowed from the later Buddhist tantric pantheon and absorbed in Maithila tradition. The **Khadirvani Tara** at Mahisi is even today worshipped as **Ugratara**. It is regarded as one of the important Tantric centres of Mithila – other important centres being Uchaitha, Katyayani-asthana, Jaymanglagarh and others. Mithila left its mark on Tantric philosophy and literature and came to be regarded as one of the important tantric centres of India. **Mantrakaumudi** (edited by Ramanath Jha and published by the Mithila Institute) and **Tantra Kaumudi** of Devanath Thakur deal with the details of Tantra worship.

From the time of Umapati (c. 14th century AD) down to Harsanatha, Vaisnavism found favour in Mithila. The famous saint, Visnupuri, was one of the greatest Vaisnava thinkers of Mithila. Poets and writers



have in one way or other paid obeisance to Visnu and they have shown affection to Vaisnava deities. Feelings towards Vaisnavism in Mithila were quite sympathetic. It is one thing to be a **Panchadevopasaka** and another to have a sympathetic attitude towards Vaisnavism. Subhadra Jha has rightly controverted the idea of **Pachadevopasana** in Vidyapati.[26] **Hari, Visnu**, Fish and Tortoise incarnations of **Visnu** are mentioned by Candesvara. That the Maithilas followed the Vaisnava tenets right from the beginning of the Karnata dynasty is evident from the **Andhratharhi Inscription** of Sridharadasa from which we learn that he erected a temple in honour of **Visnu**.[27] Dates for Visnu worship are fixed and prescribed in the writings of the Maithila **Nibandhakaras**. Govindadatta (**Govindamanasollasa**), Bhairavasimha, Visnupuri (**Bhaktiratnavali**), Devanatha and others have composed valuable works on Vaisnavism. Visnupuri was an Advaita Vedantin. Vidyapati's lyrics are, no doubt, devotional and according to Subhadra Jha, '**none of the poems in the Nepal MSS in which Madhava refers decidedly to the divine being, the name of any other patrons of the poet occurs**.' The famous Maithila poet, Govindadasa, has paid glowing tributes to Vidyapati for his contribution to Vaisnavism.

IV

We have seen above that Janaka had developed Videha as an independent centre of the new culture and the new doctrine of **Brahman**. Videha provided intellectual leadership for the whole of north-eastern India for a pretty long time. Even now the **Yajnavalkyasmrti** is the foundation of **Mitaksara** law on civil usages (as expounded by Vigneswara). It is respected and widely followed in north India. Since the days of Yajnavalkya, Mithila has been the centre of **smrtic** studies. These **Smrtis** give us a picture of contemporary society and various social problems. The Maithila **Smrti** aimed at harmonisation and reconciliation between various sects. They widened the horizon of **Dharmapramana** and some extra Vedic texts were brought into the fold of **Smrti**[28] and in this respect Sridatta, Candesvara and Vidyapati left behind their counterparts in Bengal and Orissa (Sulapani, Vidyakar and Narasimha respectively). But they failed to give any lead in suggesting social reforms. The Bengal reformer Raghunandana suggested **Prayaschita** but the Maithil **Smrti** writers kept silent and took a negative attitude as we find in Vacaspati's **Krtyachintamani** where he advises us not to learn **Mlechcha's** language (that is, Persian) as if that would solve all the problem.

The **Smrti** writers of Mithila revolved round the feudal nobles (some of them were themselves great feudal lords), who having been ousted from political power and being Brahmanas themselves, engaged in writing these works. Even though great socio-economic and political changes in and around Mithila were taking place, **Smrti** writers of Mithila did not change their ideas about age-old **Varnasramadharma**. They wrote everything for the Brahmanas and treated Sudras as non-entities though they constituted the majority. Sudras had no right to hold office of a **Pradvivaka**. These **Nibandhas** were compiled mainly for the rulers and nobles. They are found waxing eloquence over the merits of costly **Danas** (gifts). It is only Vidyapati who has recommended the less costly gift of **Masoora**. Among the conscious **Smrti** writers, Vardhamana deserves special mention because he cautions society against unscrupulous persons, masquerading as honest, like traders, druggists, physicians, arbitrators, witnesses, Mantrikas, Tantrikas, etc., and call them **Prakasa-Taskara**.[29]

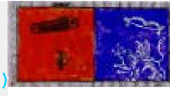
It is in this background that we propose to assess the contributions of Mithila in the realm of political thinking and administration. In the field of administration, Mithila made her mark in the earliest period of our history. Monarchy was the normal form of government in the beginning.[30] The Mithila king had five hundred **amatyas** with Khanda as their chief or **Agramatya**. At one time he was very powerful but when trouble began in the kingdom of Videha, he shifted to Vaisali. Kevatta, another name to conjure with, was an astute diplomat. He was both a temporal and spiritual adviser to the king and once when Mithila was invaded by the king of Panchala, he saved it by checking the invading army by diplomacy than by force. After their conversion into republics, the Videhas too had an assembly. The **Jatakas**[31] refer to a crowd of ministers, wealthy merchants and Brahmanas. From a study of the **Jatakas**, it is evident that the members of the assembly (**Sangha**) were known as **Rajas**. According to the **Jataka** (VI. 221 ff) Mithila had a Council of Four (King and three ministers, viz., Vijaya, Sunama and Alata). The kingdom had a beautiful woman named Pingala (like Ambapali in Vaisali). In the beginning both politically and administratively, Vaisali was controlled by Videha. One of the greatest heritage of Mithila in the realm of administrative system is the republican tradition of Vaisali with which even the great Buddha was highly impressed and adopted it as the model for his **Samgha** constitution. He called them Gods on earth.

Under the Karnatas, the administrative system was modelled on the old pattern with certain local variations to suit the local needs. Monarchy was the form of government and there was a Council of Ministers (consisting of feudal nobles) to assist the king. The Prime Minister was known as **Mahamatta** and the Chief Justice as **Mahadharmadhyaksa**. Other important ministers were **Mantrinas, Mahasandhivigrahika, Mahamudradhikarta, Mahasarvadhikarta, Sarvarthachintakam**, etc. Under the Karnatas, there was also a Department of Transfer – a new innovation indeed long before Sher Shah. The Karnata administrative system continued even under the Oinvaras. Village administration was unique feature and was the core of the entire administrative machinery. There was also a Council of Feudatories. The **Sarvarthachintakam** looked after people’s welfare and no aspect of administration was overlooked. The king was the fountain of justice and caste played no part in political thinking as is evident from Candesvara.

V

In its description of Mithila, the **Mahajanaka Jataka** (No, 539) speaks of all round artistic development. In the realm of fine arts, Mithila made a remarkable contribution in respect of music and painting. Even today Mithila has special songs for each and every occasion. Mithila has special regards for her typical modulation and tunes. The Mithila School of Music has been able to maintain its pristine purity because of the unique contribution made by her womenfolk. Mithila has a special melody of her own. **Nachari, Yoga, Uchiti, Samadaun, Tirhut, Malara, Kohbara, Vatagamni, Marsiya** etc., are some of the typical Maithili songs having appeal to every ear.

The **Varnanaratnakara** of Jyotirisvara mentions seven kinds of defects of singers and fourteen kinds of **Gitadosa**. Sivasimha was a great lover and patron of music and he employed Jayanta to attune the songs of Vidyapati. Vidyapati’s lyrics added beauty and created a new record in matters of musical development of Mithila in all its aspects. Various authors like Simhabhupala (author of the famous work, **Samgitaratnakaravyakhya**), Jaggaddhara (author of **Samgitasarvasva**), Ghansyama (author of

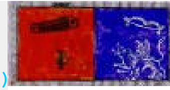


Srihastamuktavali), Mahesa Thakur and others have written standard works on music. Mithila had its own **ragas** and **raginis** as is known to us from Lochana's **Ragatarangini**.[32]

In the field of painting, Mithila has made a unique contribution and the modern world has developed a craze for Mithila paintings. When and how this special type of painting came into existence, we cannot definitely say but this much is certain that this art is of a very antique origin and it had its beginning in the Puranic culture. Its connection with Tantric form of worship is indicative of its antiquity. Mithila's religious beliefs and institutions have been kept alive through the medium of this pictorial folk art. Every specific painting has a tale to tell. Its importance can be well realised from the fact that only recently a German art connoisseur came to Madhubani and visited art centres to study the implication and meaning of the Mithila painting.

Though Mithila is considered to be earliest Aryan centre in the whole of eastern India, the people of Mithila have remained devoted worshippers of **Siva** and **Sakti** (in all the forms). Social functions of all denominations in Mithila are preceded by a type of painting known as **Aripana** (**Alpana** in Bengal). No social function in Mithila, even the lowliest one, can be thought of without the **aripana** painting. The type of **aripana** differs from function to function. **Aripana** is sketched on earth, wooden plank, place of worship, prayer and is done for all occasions (from birth to death). Seven round **aripanas** are made in **Kohbara** in which fish, bamboo, pond etc., are depicted in painting. We have different types of paintings for marriage, **Chaturthi**, **Dwiragamana**, **Mundana-Upanayana** etc. **Mahuaka** is a prominent painting for the wedding of girls. The popular types of paintings or **aripanas** and others are as follows:

i. **Kohbara**
ii. **Mahuaka**
iii. **Aripana** of nine planets on the occasion of **Chaturthi**
iv. **Koswa** – on the occasion of **Dwiragamana**
v. **Purainipata** – on the occasion of **Mundana**
vi. **Kobra** – in **Sravana** on the occasion of **Madhusravani**
vii. **Sun** and **Moon** on the occasion of **Ganesachautha**
viii. **Kakwa** – on the occasion of **Samkranti**
ix. **Durga** – on the **Navami** day of **Dashera**
x. **Chausamkha** – on the occasion of **Devotthan Ekadasi**
xi. **Patwa** – on the occasion of the **Bhratridvitiya** day
xii. **Kelathamha** – on the occasion of **Deepavali** day (also known as **Sukharatrika Aripana**)
xiii. **Chan-Suraj** – on the occasion of **Navanna** in **Agrahana**
xiv. **Har-Harwa** – on the occasion of **Viswatpanchmi** (depicting a pair of bullock, a plough and a farmer)
xv. **Astadala** – for religious occasions
xvi. **Tusharipuja** – for unmarried girls
xvii. **Prthvipuja** or **Svastika**
xviii. **Dasapata aripana**
xix. **Sasthipuja – aripana**
xx. **Chaturthi ka Aripana**



xxi. **Kojagaraka Aripana** – uses **Makhana** leaf as the base

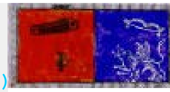
These paintings are connected with the daily life of the people of Mithila and are the products of the various **Samskaras** ranging from eight to sixteen. The Vedic **Sarvatobhadra** or **Svastika** continues in painting down to this day and is drawn or sketched by the women around the **Tulasi** plant in the month of **Kartika**. . Directions for attractive drawings or paintings are found in the **Krtyaratnakara**. The art of painting in Mithila has been preserved since time immemorial by the womenfolk of the Karana Kayasthas and Brahmanas. Line drawing on the ground is known as **Aripana**. Most of them are symbolical of tantric designs but the majority of the patterns are shapes representing natural objects like flowers, leaves, trees, fish, peacocks, snakes, sun and the moon, gods and goddesses, ploughmen, sweepers, bhariyas (carriers) etc. The **aripanas** express collective imagination and group function.

The **Gosaunikaghara**, **Kohbara**, **Harisaun-puja-ka-chitra**, **Sarovarachitra** etc., are also important representations of the Mithila School of Painting. The aim of the wall painting is to mirror the colour and variety of life and majority of them are just glimpses of life environment and nature. Inside the **Kohbara**, the four corners are painted with figures of four women known as **Naina-Yogina** carrying various articles on their heads. On the wall would be **bamboo-bash** (**Bansa**) painted complete with birds. On another would be a lotus plant with flowers capped by a human face depicting the moon. In the verandah outside **Kohbara**, scenes from rural life of Mithila are profusely illustrated.

VI

Mithila made a notable contribution towards the development of Indian culture in the field of language and literature and its script is important in the sense that it is one of the earliest known scripts of northern India.[33] Its antiquity is vouchsafed by the **Lalitavistara** which mentions the **Vaidehi** script. **Mithilaksara** or **Tirhuta**, as it is popularly known, emerged out of an eastern variety of the Gupta script as is shown in Buhler's chart. The inscriptions if Adityasena exhibit the first remarkable change in the development of north-eastern script. The various later Gupta, Pala, Karnata and Oinvara inscriptions discovered from Mithila show the typical traits of Maithili script. The script has travelled beyond the Ganga as is evident from the two epigraphic records discovered from Suryagarha and Santhal Pargana. Maithili script was equally popular in Tibet and there are thousands of Tibetan manuscripts in Maithili character – and some of them are preserved in the library of the Bihar Research Society, Patna. Its tantric origin is suggested by '**Anji**' – presenting tantric **Kundalini** displaying creative energy. Every letter is suggestive of some sense. The earliest source of this script is the **Kutila** script which, in course of time, came to be known as **Vaivarta** script, mentioned by Dharmaswami.

The literary tradition of Mithila has been very old. Nanyadeva was one of the greatest patrons of art and culture and since then the tradition has continued without any break. Nanyadeva, Jayadeva, Jyotirisvara, Umapati, Vidyapati, Govindadas, Amrtakara, Lochan and various others are names to conjecture with. **Supadma** grammar, a specific contribution of Mithila in the field of **Vyakarana**, is studied in the districts of Jessore and Khulna (Bangladesa). Lochana has discussed the song metres of Mithila and has given a list of ninety six **ragas**. In modern times, Chanda Jha revived most of those metres. In modern times, the common types of Maithili poetry are:



i. **Tirhuti**
ii. **Batagamni** (Nayika in Abhisara)
iii. **Goalari** (Sports of Krsna in the company of Gopis)
iv. **Rasa** (Krsna's sportive Lila with Gopi)
v. **Mana**

Other important forms of Maithili folk poetry have been mentioned earlier. The Maithili folk literature is equally important from literary point of view. It is marked by simplicity and freshness. Maithili folk literature has long romantic tales like **Lorik, Bihula, Salhesa, Dinabhadri, Naika-Banjara, Satikumari**, etc. The tradition of lyric poetry set by early **Charyapadas**, elaborated and perfected by Jayadeva, Umapati, Vidyapati and Govindadas, is a priceless heritage of Indian literature. Maithili lyrics are distinguished by their melodies.

VII

One of the important aspects of the Maithili culture is the system of the **Panjis** and no account of the cultural heritage of Mithila can be complete without it. The **Panji** are the most exhaustive and authoritative genealogies of the Brahmanas and Karanakayasthas. The **Panjikaras** guard them as their valuable treasures so much so that they do not allow even genuine researchers to look into it. The **Panjis** are written in a technical style of their own and cannot be handled by a layman. Women do not find a place in these records except occasionally and daughters are recorded not in the families of their births but in those of their marriages.

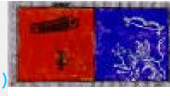
According to Grierson, the **Panjis** give much useful information and are one of the most extraordinary records in existence. It has been in existence from the first quarter of the fourteenth century and forms a piece of Maithili literature. So far only two scientific books on the subject are available:

i. **Maithila Brahmano Ki Panji Vyavastha** by Ramanatha Jha (in Hindi); and
ii. **Maithila Karanakayastha Panji Ka Sarveksan** by Binod Bihari Varma (in Maithili).

In Mithila, the Panjis are punctiliously preserved by the Brahmanas and Kayasthas and those who handle it are known as **Panjikaras**. Rasbehari Das and Ghananand Jha have also written about the **Panjis** in their own way. The **Panji** seems to have played a very prominent part in the development of early Maithili language, particularly at a time when the standard racy country words were developed. According to Grierson, it was a great achievement of the Maithilas. It could not do away with the flambuoyant impression and profusion of compounds. It preserves information about all the families. Though written in a concise manner, it is exact, logical and relevant.

The Panjis are factual records and have been put in a language[34] which is ordinarily free from sentimental rhetoric. The Panjis prohibit marriages with the girls of the following kinds:

i. **Sagotra** – descended from the same sage from father's side;
ii. **Sapinda** – within the seventh direct descent either from the maternal or paternal side;



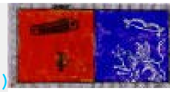
iii. In any case, related by being up to the seventh from father's side and up to fifth from mother's side in descent;
iv. Issues of grandfathers, both maternal and paternal; and
v. Daughter of the brother of step-mother.

Before marriage, the **Panjikaras** issue **Asvajanapatra**.

While summing up we may say that the development of Buddhism on the other side of the Ganges from the stage of **Mahayana** to the height of **Sahajayana** influenced the life and condition of the people of Bihar in general and Mithila in particular. The creed of **Sahajayana** led to the emergence of social revolutionaries known as **Siddhas** who preached in the language of the people, ridiculed image worship and efficacy of religious baths and pilgrimages. This line of thinking of the **Siddhas** is represented in later times by Kabir who also flourished on the borderline of Mithila. Between the eighth and sixteenth centuries AD, there was efflorescence of philosophical and speculative activity and the polemics between the Maithila **Naiyayikas** and the Buddhists constitute a brilliant chapter in the intellectual history of Bihar, nay of India.

The Karnata regime provided a stable social order in the form of an ingenious hierarchical system and maintenance of family genealogies. Mithila under the Karnatas witnessed enriched intellectualism with a lyrical and colourful stream of music and fine arts. The music developed on lines different from the present day Hindustani music of northern India. The impact of south Indian music on Mithila is obvious. In the **Goraksavijaya** of Vidyapati there is a reference to a dancer from Tailangdesa.

A wave of popular Hinduism in the form of **Bhagavata** creed and Saivism is reflected in contemporary drama, song and dance and also in the festivities, domestic rituals and folk lore of the common people. People's language emerged as the national language of Mithila as early as the 12^{th}-13^{th} century AD when other language groups of North India were still groaning under the deadweight of Sanskrit. Moreover, almost parallel to the sophisticated art, pottery, textile painting and paintings on walls and grounds grew up under the influence of popular Hinduism. This was a notable development during the Oinvara period when we find the dissemination of courtly art into the villages with the result that even after the court ceased to be powerful the cultural trends remained alive. Since the days of **Yajurveda** right up to the present day, the Maithilas have succeeded in maintaining their cultural identity without any break and that has been possible due partly to its geographical setting and partly to the innate conservatism of its people who are the real custodians of their cultural traits.



APPENDIX

1. A RARE SURYA IMAGE FROM BARAUNI*

Generally speaking, the Surya image is not very common everywhere in India. While there is abundance of other images, Surya image is decidedly rare. Finest specimen of this image is preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and during my recent visit, I closely studied some of them, keeping in view the present image in question.

Before coming down to the actual study of the image, I would like to say, by way of introduction, something about the general features of the Surya images found in different parts of India. The Khajuraho Surya is a glowing body covered by a coat of mail, though it has dwindled into a strip underneath the ornaments of his chest and extends to the hilt. Full blown lotus flowers in two hands are symbols of manifestation on a triple stalk of time. Surya is one of the most important symbols of ancient Indian art motif and religion. One of the most important symbols of Hinduism is the four-headed Lingam – the four heads are those of the four central deities of the Hindu pantheon, viz., Visnu, Brahma, Surya and Siva (afterwards resolved into three – trimurti). Visnu, in his dual form Narayana-Visnu, represents his yogic state, the other his active cosmic powers, eventually suppressed by Surya, whose images are often difficult to distinguish from those of Visnu.[1] The physical basis of Hindu metaphysics upon which its artistic symbol is founded, is centralised in the apparent movement round the earth, of which the cosmic cross was the symbol in the ancient Aryan world. The four points of Cross indicated the position of the Sun at midnight, sunrise, noon and at sunset respectively. The Sun sustains the world. His **Chakra** seems to have been evolved from the **Svastika**. The Upanisadas thus explain the mystical meaning: “It is the soul of the universe, it is god himself.”[2]

M S Vats has brought to light some specimen of Surya images.[3] Those images are remarkable as they have lotuses in both hands highly ornamented and wear a high **Kiritamukuta**. To the right and left are

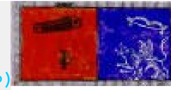
Rajni and Niksubha, each holding a chowrie in her outer hand and a lotus or flower in the other. In front of them are two male attendants, **Dandi** and **Pingala**. Besides these, there are Usha and Pratyusha shooting darkness. The representation of Surya was possibly a Scythic importation to India.[4] It was introduced by Iranian Sun worshippers. The Surya having two hands holding lotuses with stalks, was taken as the healer of all diseases. Gradually the number of attendants increased and besides Dandi and Pingala on either side of the charioteer Aruna, the two arrow shooting goddesses Usha and Pratyusha appear as accessories. During the Pala period, sacred thread on the body of central deity is common and his additional attendants in the persons of Mahasveta and the two queens Sanjna and Chhaya are almost invariably present in the Surya relief.

The iconographic representation of Surya came to be far more elaborate and several accessories were added. In the later reliefs of Surya it is seen that the figure of Dandi holds a staff on the proper left. The lotus flowers, held in the hands, are not mere buds but fully blossomed ones shown parallel to the ears, and seven horses are invariably represented on the chariot. The booted legs show foreign influence in art. Southern Surya of the medieval period did not come under any forceful influence for their legs are always left bare. The Persian influence on Surya image is even more strongly marked in the Gupta period, where not only the sun image but also his two attendants Dandi and Pingala, the latter a pot-bellied figure holds a pen and an inkpot.

In the Surya legend and art motif, Aruna and Revanta are no less important. Aruna[5], a son of Vinata and brother of Garuda, is a personification of dawn and that is why his image plays an important part. He is the charioteer of the Sun and is said to yoke the seven horses bearing the names of metres or chhandas. Surya and his son Revanta are shown riding on horse back, but the distinctive feature of Revanta is that he should be shown a hunting accompanied by a host of attendants. He is represented as a rider in the company with male and female followers, the two armed, booted, holding in his left hand the reins of the horses and the drinking cup in his right hand. The artists even include among the accessories a retriever dog. A different account of Ravanta is given in the **Markandeya Purana**.

With this background, we shall now come to the study of the present image in question. In Bihar, a few Surya images have been found. One of the most characteristic examples of the Bihar sculpture is the large group of Sun-god. The Rajmahal standing Surya is represented on a lotus shaped chariot drawn by seven horses and driven by legless Aruna, the dawn. The artist has concentrated his attention on the effigy of the god, reducing the chariot, horses and charioteer to the position of minor accessories, in such a way that a casual spectator might fail to perceive their significance.[6]

The present image in question is remarkable in various ways. Both these images are standing on lotus petals. The body, in these images, is carefully modelled with considerable regard to realism and the same commendations may be bestowed on the attendants. The decorative framework is carefully treated and the whole composition produces an imposing and a very pleasing effect. The mechanical execution is perfect and the design is more restrained. The prominent **Kirtimukha** conveys supreme reality. We know that **Kirtimukha** was very frequent in the Gupta age not only in images but also in temples. The **Kirtimukha** tradition continued in the later period and it was one of the prominent features of the eastern school of medieval sculpture.[7]



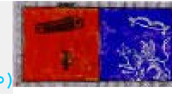
Almost all iconographic representations are seen in our present images. This image, standing on lotus pedestal, and highly ornamental, are holding full blown lotuses in two hands. The head dress or the high **mukuta** is prominent in the image. Below the pedestal are shown seven horses speeding with Surya's chariot which is being driven by the charioteer Aruna. The study of this portion of this image is a bit problematic and it is not very easy to say whether the charioteer Aruna is in flight. Whether it is legless or not, is also a problem here. The two male attendants in the Barauni image are Dandi and Pingala and there are the two female figures in flight, each with a bow in her inner hand. These two may be identified with Usha and Pratyusha, shooting darkness. They wear high head-dress. Besides the sacred thread, there is another ornament around the head. To the right and left are probably Rajni and Nikshubha holding in outer hands a lotus bud and flower. Other objects of the image, worth studying, are the elephants and horses with riders in speed. The flying figures, carrying garlands, are other important features of this image. The present image is decidedly of the period when the foreign influence was on the wane but had not completely disappeared. The two legs are booted and as such the foreign influence on this image is perceptible. The booted Surya is a peculiarity of the Gupta period and hence the present image can be tentatively assigned to the later Gupta age. The sacred thread is, no doubt, a common feature of the Pala age but other items weigh more in favour of its being placed in between the Gupta and the Pala period. A more critical study of this image can be possible only when it is compared with other Bihar images in the background of other north Indian images.

*The Barauni Surya image is now preserved in the G D College Museum and Jayamanglagarh image is now being worshipped in a temple there. Its photo was printed in 1952, G D College Bulletin, No. 2.

R K Choudhary, **G D College Bulletin Series No.2;** Cf. **R C Abhinandan Granth** S V, 'History of Begusarai'.

2. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF TIRHUT AS GATEWAY TO BENGAL IN EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD

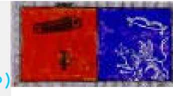
Tirhut, lying on the west of Mahananda, was comparatively free from the inroads of the early Muslim invaders. The reasons are obvious. The Muslin governors of the frontier tracts like Lakhnauti, Oudh and Bihar, were so frequently changed or were so busy with their own problems that they had hardly any time to attack Tirhut. The Muslims on their way to Lakhnauti generally marched from Oudh via Bihar and naturally therefore areas lying to the north of the Ganges were left free and undisturbed. There were some natural difficulties too for the upcountry Muslims as they were not at all accustomed to cross rivers and rivulets. On the other side of Tirhut they had to cross only one river Ganga at some convenient point. Manmohan Chakravarti has suggested that a network of smaller streams in north Bihar presented a formidable obstacle to the rapid movement of Muslim cavalry (**JASB,** NS; XI. 407-8). The small rivers of north Bihar were easily fordable and when the Muslim incursions became frequent, they realised the strategic importance of north Bihar and began to pass through its region. Throughout the medieval period Kosi was the undisputable boundary between Tirhut and Bengal and the traditional boundary line always claimed by the Muslim rulers of Bengal and recognised by the Delhi Emperors down to Babar was river Gandaka on the northern bank of the river Ganges. Through this river tract of



north Bhagalpur and Munger lay the highway of communication between Bengal and Oudh down to the fourteenth century AD (**SHB** – II; 13 fn). Narayanapur (Jalalgarh) in the Purnea district has been described by Martin as the frontier outpost of the Kosi side. **Narankoe** or **Diyar-i-Kosi** may be taken as a mistake for **Diyar-i-Kosi** (Cf. Martin; **Eastern India**; III.82; **ABORI** – XXXV.91). Bengal's strategic point of defence against any land attack from the western side was narrow pass of Teliagarhi near Rajmahal.

The strategic importance of Tirhut was accepted by the Muslim diplomats. It was very easy for armies to march from Bengal towards Tirhut and Oudh along the northern bank of the Ganga crossing the Kosi and the Gandaka at some convenient points. The kingdom of Mithila lay between Kosi and the Gandaka and hence the name of Gateway to Bengal is given to Tirhut distric of Darbhanga (**SHB** – II. 5,13 fn 2). Minhaj has mentioned Bihar, Tirhut and Darbhanga separately. In course of his Bengal campaign, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban claimed to have subdued **Iqlim-i-Lakhnauti** and **Arshah-i-Bangala**, while he advised his son Nasiruddin Bughra Khan to exert for the conquest of **Diyar-i-Bangala** (**ED** – II.67). It is believed that the dominions of Dasrath Danujrai of Sonargaon in Bang were included in **Diyar-i- Bangala** (**JASB** (L) – XIX.36). According to Barni, Danujrai entered into agreement with Balban and agreed to guard against the escape of the rebellious Tughril Tughan by water. **Diya-i-Bangala** is indicative of some frontier outpost of Bengal like **Diyar-i-Kosi**.

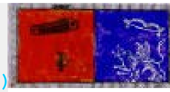
In the list furnished by Minhaj about the conquests of Iltutmish Bihar, Tirhut and Darbhanga are specifically mentioned. On the authority of the **TN** it has been suggested that Darbhanga was so called because it was gateway to Bengal. **Diyar-i-Bangala** and **Dar-i-Bangal** are two distinct terms, the former signifying a region having a wider meaning relating to a tract or region, whereas **Dar** means gate and is the appellative of a smaller specific area, forming as it were the gateway to Bengal. The Muslim sources testify to the existence of a larger geographical unit, **Diyar-i-Bangala**, as independent. Since **Diyar** (meaning a tract even today on the banks of the Ganga) indicates a special geographical unit, it must refer to a small independent kingdom and in that sense we may take it to be the meeting point of the kingdom of Bengal and Tirhut. Its exact identification is not yet possible. It has been suggested that the area around the Garhi pass (Teliagarhi) was the gateway to Bengal and might conveniently called **Diyar-i-Bangala**. Garhi was a part of Purnea, the eastern fringe of the Tirhut kingdom. Purnea was the stepping stone to Bengal and since route to Purnea was through Darbhanga, it was called **Diyar-i-Bangala**. **Diyar-i-Bangala** seems to have been co-terminus with **Diyar-i-Kosi** on the eastern frontier of Tirhut. The bigness of the size of Sarkar Tirhut during the days of Great Mughals is an evidence of the fact that the size of Darbhanga was sufficiently great. It was through these two regions that Bengal could be approached. The theory of the origin of Darbhanga after Darbhangi Khan is of recent origin and fake. Minhaj must have been conscious of the two expressions he has used. **Diyar-i-Bang** is opposed to the rules of philology. Grierson says, "I know of no instance in the modern languages of India in which a *b* situated like *b* of Bengal has become *bha*." (**IA** – XIV. 183 fn – 3). Ayodhya Prasad has suggested that Darbhanga was the western frontier of Bengal. On the authority of the **Futuh-Salatin**, it has been suggested that the name Darbhanga came into use during the time of the Tughlaqs.



3. A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE LAKSMANASAMVAT (BASED ON THE EXAMINATION OF OLD AND NEW FACTS, LITERARY AND EPIGRAPHIC)

The problem of the Laksamana Samvat has been engrossing the minds of a number of scholars, here and abroad, since it was first raked up by scholars like R L Mitra and Kielhorn. The last scholar[1] in the series was late lamented Dr A S Altekar who suggested that the era started in the year 1200 AD. Mm V V Mirashi[2], without going into the details of the question, accepted the findings of Altekar and declared that the vexed question of the L Sam was now finally settled.[3] Like Altekar, B P Sinha, relying on the accounts of Dharmasvami, propounded the same view. Now the question is that if we accept 1200 AD as the starting point of the L Sam, the whole established chronology of Mithila, otherwise confirmed by other eras, would have to be changed and thoroughly recast which, in the present state of our knowledge, is well nigh impossible. There are certain fixed chronological eras, stand confirmed and we cannot, by any standard of chronology or by any stretch of historical or fanciful imagination, change them altogether.

How and when the L Sam came to be used in Mithila is yet in the limbo of oblivion admitting of all types of conjectures. The earlier writers like Mitra (**JASB**; Vol 47, pp. 398ff) and Kielhorn (**IA** – XIX. 7) placed the era between 1106 and 1119-20 respectively. Mitra examined six **MSS** containing the names of the month, tithi, the day and the year of the copying between **Saka** 1026 and 1031 (1104 and 1109 AD). Other MSS bearing the dates in **Saka** 1027, 1028, 1029 and 1041 were also examined. Abul Fazal in his **Akbarnama** (**IA**; 1890, P. 1) has also accepted **Saka** 1041 as the starting point of the L Sam. Kielhorn verified six dates of the L Sam, and fixed it at 1119 AD (7TH October). Since then it came to be believed that the era was counted from October to October (**JBORS** – XX. 20). Late P N Misra of Maldah verified twelve dates and came to the conclusion that four dates worked out satisfactorily with Kielhorn's or Mithila's almanac epochs (**JASB** – 1926, p. 373). Both Mitra and Kielhorn were supported by a host of scholars like R D Banerji[4], G S Ojha[5], Grierson[6], Chakravarti[7] and others. According to Jayaswal, up to the days of Akbar, the era commenced from 1119-20 AD and it became a lunar epoch after that. Ojha suggested that the era commenced from the first day of the bright fortnight of Magha. In support of his view he quoted a **MS** of Narpatiacharya bearing the L Sam 494 (Saka 1536 = 1614 AD). Jayaswal holds the view that in order to obtain the true dates of the **MSS**, dates in the L Sam have to be converted first into the Fasli year and then into modern years.[8] He had examined eighteen MSS. Subhadra Jha, the latest Maithila writer on the subject, holds that L Sam is solar in Mithila and begins from the Mesa-samkranti.[9] Thus there are three views with regard to the beginning of the L Sam: i) according to Kielhorn, it was a lunar year beginning with the first day of the bright fortnight of Kartika (in Mithila, no year starts from this date); ii) according to Ojha, from the month of Magha; and iii) according to Subhadra Jha, from the **Mesa-samkranti**. Jayaswal took it to be luni-solar and held that it became lunar with the introduction of the Fasli era. In Mithila, the Saka era is also solar and commences on the **Mesa-samkranti** day when the Sun crosses the first point of Aries. The Vikrama era begins from the first day of Chaitra and Fasli on the first day of Sravana. On the basis of different calculations, Subhadra Jha places the starting of the L Sam between 1108 and 1120 AD.[10] The spurious Bisphi grant contains almost all the eras prevalent in Mithila but we can hardly place any reliance on it.[11] H P Sastri has also touched this problem in his own way.[12] The Tarauni **Ms** of Vidyapati's poems, said to the earliest, have **L Sam 293**



(Saka 1324 = 1402 AD). Jayaswal, while reviewing Sastri's edition of Vidyapati's **Kirtilata**, has made conjectures which are uncalled for now in the present state of our knowledge (**JBORS** – XIII. 297 ff). Vidyabhusana equates L Sam 293 with 1400 AD.[13]

There is a good deal of difference regarding the origin of the L Sam.[14] The era must have been established not as marking the reckoning of the date of accession but that of his birth sometime between 1108 and 1119 AD. H C Roychoudhury regarded this Laksmanasena as the founder of the Sena dynasty of Pithi (**Orientalia**; pt ii, p. 114). This theory does not seem to be tenable as no powerful Pithi king seems to have established any era. R C Mazumdar holds that the era was not founded by Laksmanasena.[15] It is not yet exactly known as to how the era was started but it is believed by some that after the destruction of the Hindu kingdom, people counted date with reference to the destruction of the last Hindu dynasty.[16] Sinha says, "The only possible explanation is that reckoning began after the end of his reign somewhere about 1200 AD, for the destruction of the reign of such a great Indian king was bound to make a deep impression on the contemporary time and that the ea commenced from the end of the reign of Laksmanasena in Magadha."[17] It may be noted here that the reign of this monarch did not come to an end in 1200 AD as we find Sridharadasa completing his **Saduktikarnamrta** in 1206 AD in the court of the above mentioned king. How are we to reconcile these two statements? It may be further noted here that the era was started not in Magadha but in Mithila.

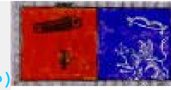
The epigraphic evidence of the date reckoning in this era is available to us from the three inscriptions in the Gaya region (**CIB** – 113). D C Sircar holds that it originated there.[18] He says, "It is interesting to note that the years of the era are associated generally with **atitarajya** ....that this reckoning was originally counted from the accession of Laksmanasena[19] about 1179 AD. ....Govindapala was ousted by the Gahadavalas who were ultimately ousted by the Senas. This possibility explains the introduction of the **atitarajya** reckoning of Govindapala and Laksmanasena in the said region and its introduction then in north Bihar by the people of that part who fled to the north after the Muslim occupation of south Bihar."[20]

It should, however, be borne in mind here that although other eras were in vogue in Mithila, the L Sam had assumed the character of a national era in so far as Mithila is concerned. Even after the dissolution of the Mughal period, this era firmly held the ground. In one of the hand-notes, brought to light recently by S Jha, only L Sam is mentioned and nothing else and this goes to show how the Maithilas fastidiously clung to it. In so far as L Sam is concerned, there are very few records from Magadha and Bengal, whereas in Mithila almost all the records and documents invariably bear the L Sam reckoning.[21] A document of L Sam 620 is equated with Saka 1651 (=1729-30 AD).[21a] After examining a number of documents, having corresponding eras, Subhadra Jha observed, "**L Sam was the national era of Mithila**."[22] Till L Sam 374, the difference was of **1120** AD. This, along with the evidence of **Akbaranama**, the **MSS** of Narapatiacharya, **Smrtitattva** and other **MSS**, referred to by Jayaswal, the last of which was in L Sam 550, goes to suggest that up to 1619 AD, the difference of the year in L Sam and its equivalent AD was not less than 1119 AD. But against this goes the evidence of the Tarauni Palm leaf **Ms**.

We do not know of any Laksmanasena of Pithi. We learn from Taranatha that there were two Laksmanasenas (**IA** – 1875; P. 366) but it is doubtful if they founded any era. The Senas of Pithi came

after the Senas of Bengal and they were not so powerful as to mark the beginning of an era. The Tibetan traveller Dharmasvamin, who visited their court, has left an eye-witness account about them. It is, therefore, natural to hold that the era was associated with the Senas of Bengal. According to Taranatha, it was counted from the time of Hemantasena (**JASB** – 1935; P. 48) though Abul Fazal connects it with Laksmanasena (**IA** – 1890; P. 1). It is also a fact that he could not have started the era himself between 1108 and 1119 AD. In so far as Mithila tradition is concerned, it is usually believed that when Ballalasena was busy with his Mithila campaign, the news of the birth of his son reached him and he is credited with having signalised this event by proclaiming the introduction of L Sam in Tirhut. The event of his conquest falls between 1108 and 1119 AD. It is not possible to ascribe its beginning to the destruction of the Sena kingdom, rather to the date of his birth, which was an event of immense significance to a father, out on important political mission. The variation of the era between 1106 and 1120 can be explained by the fact that no definite date or time of its actual beginning could be located by the persons using it in the beginning. Whereas the earliest **MSS** record is dated in 50 L Sam, those of the Gaya region (the earliest being L Sam 51) are in the **atitarajya** reckoning. The word 'atita' has confused the writers on the subject. The era according to Mithila tradition was established by Ballala in a region other than Bengal and that is why, the era could not be reckoned in Bengal even three centuries after Laksmanasena. No records of this king bear this era and hence it is clear that those who used it later on referred to it as **atita** meaning simply the past event and nothing more.

The new theory has been started as a result of the discovery of the biography of Dharmasvamin, a Tibetan traveller, who met Buddhasena of Gaya and Ramasimhadeva of Tirhut between 1234 and 1236 AD. It is on the basis of this particular evidence that Altekar and Sinha have propounded their new theories. Luciano Petech has also touched the problem but he had no knowledge of Dharmasvamin. He has tackled the problem in his own way. He says, "This reckoning is definitely not identical with the well-known L Sam, the initial date of which oscillated in various periods, but was always supposed to fall in the first quarter of the twelfth century AD. The inscription of Asokacalla and Jayasena are not dated in a definite era but merely after the fall of the Sena kingdom. ....This is the only way of explaining the peculiar expression **atitarajya** and the L Sam era has nothing to do with it."[23] Petech has at last accepted the truth that the confusing expression of the Gaya inscriptions has nothing to do with the actual foundation of the era. The Senas of Pithi were local rulers and they had possibly no connection with the Senas of Bengal. Even if we attach any importance to the expression (**atitarajya**) of the Janibigha inscription, it should be noted here that the event relates only to the Senas of Pithi and has nothing to say about the actual starting of the era in Mithila. My submission is that these two issues should be studied separately. Conceding the fact that the fall of the Sena kingdom of Bengal marked a turning point in the history of India, why did not the people of Bengal themselves start an era to commemorate the name of Laksmanasena? Let us simply accept the fact that it closed a chapter of Indian history and the people of Bengal did not feel enthusiastic about his commemoration. Altekar says, "People in Bihar, therefore, seem to have preferred to refer to the past rule. ....Later on the idea of an era to mark the extinction of the kingdom was given up in favour of an era to mark his birth and hence the presumption of later inscriptions about its beginning at C. 1118-9 AD."[24] It thus appears that he has tried to compromise with both the views though he suggests something else. According to D C Sircar, the era was brought to north Bihar by the people of the Gaya region.[25] The whole thing boils down to the fact



that L Sam **atitarajya** reckoning seems to have come into existence on the extirpation of Sena rule from Bihar although calculation must have been the same as the regional reckoning of that monarch.[26] On the basis of these facts and the Gaya inscription of Govindapala, Sircar has come to the conclusion that the era was started in 1179 AD.[27] All the Gaya inscriptions nowhere give us an idea about the actual starting of the era. The initial year is nowhere mentioned nor does any epigraph of Laksmanasena give us any such clue. The **Anulia CP**, **Govindpur CP**, **Tarpandighi CP**, and the **Sunderban CP** of Laksmanasena give us the regnal year 3, 2 and 3 respectively.[28] The **Dacca image inscription** of the same king has the following text: **Sri Laksmanasenadevasya Sam 3**. R D Banerji contended that this inscription was dated in the L Sam (**JASB** – 1913; P.171). N G Majumdar, who has also maintained that he started the era, has admitted that it is by no means the only conclusion deducible from the expression, **Sri Laksmanasenadevasya Samvat 3**. It can also mean simply in the third regnal year of the king without necessarily having any reference to the era started by him.

The era, as it is used today in Mithila, is usually associated with his birth. The real circumstances, unde which the era was started, are to be found out though traditionally it is associated with the victory of the Sena army over Mithila which fortunately coincided with the birth of Laksmanasena. This much appears to be sure that the era was started in Mithila and not elsewhere. Just like the **Tarauni palm leaf Ms**, we have another important source in the **Khojpur Image Inscription** (Khojpur, Dist. Darbhanga). This inscription is dated in L Sam 147 and refers to the installation of the image of Durga and seems to support the commencement of the era in 1108 AD as Asadha Sudi 12 Friday correctly corresponded with June 18, 1255 AD (**JBRS** – XXXVII. Pp. 11-15). This has been edited by D C Sircar. In two of his articles. He has propounded two different theories and it appears that he is not himself sure about the issue (1108 and 1179). There are various documents in this era in Mithila. A terracotta plaque, in my possession, possibly bears the date **L Sam 69**; a **Ms** of the **Bhattikavyatika** of the Asiatic Society Library bears the date, **L Sam 159**; the **Tilkesvara temple inscription** of Karmaditya gives us **L Sam 212**. The two evidences of Vidyapati and the Khojpur inscription are definite on the point that the era started in **1108 AD**.

A study of all the concerned documents goes to show that the era was started in Mithila between 1108 ans 1119 AD and the present divergence of about twelve years shall remain unaccounted until further evidence is forthcoming. Where and how the lacunae came in it is difficult to say in the present state of our knowledge, but the fact remains that the chronological history of Mithila can be easily determined if we place the initial date somewhere between 1108 and 1119 AD. Since this era has been prevalent in Mithila from the days of the Karnatas, it is natural to presume that it was started either on account of the resounding Sena victory or to commemorate the birth of Laksmanasena. The L Sam of Mithila has nothing to do with the three inscriptions of the Gaya region which definitely speak of the **atitarajya**. Not a single example of the era in the **atitarajya** reckoning has so far been discovered from Mithila. Hence before any final opinion is given, all the evidences have to be collected, collated, and scientifically studied together. P L Paul has rightly observed that 'the people of Bihar (**specially of Mithila** – emphasis mine) dated their records by associating them with great Hindu kings with whom they had some connection. ....This may be the date when Senas under Vijayasena for the first time came into conflict with Nanyadeva of Mithila or more probably with the date of the birth of Laksmanasena' (P L Paul; **Early History of Bengal**, I. 107)[29].

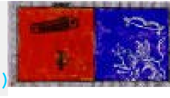
4. KRSNADATTA MAITHILA AND HIS WORKS*

Mithila has produced a galaxy of intellectuals in every branch of knowledge. Since the beginning of the 9th century AD , there has been a regular and unrestricted flow of dramatic literature there and several works of eminence have been produced.[1] In the long list of dramatists, Krsnadatta Maithila is one of the loftiest names, who wrote two allegorical **Natakas**. On a study of his works, it became clear that the writers of the history of Sanskrit literature have done scant justice with this reputed scholar.

I am forced to take up the study of this author after going though the much advertised publication of one of his works, namely **Puranjanacharita**[2], by Miss Nilam Solanki, M A, of Vittalbhai Patel Mahavidyalaya, Gujarat. Miss Solanki claims to have produced an authoritative edition, but to my mind her claims are baseless. The publication, based as such on a single manuscript, is defective. She has not gone through all available materials regarding the author and does not seem to have compared and collated it. Before proceeding to say anything about the author and his works, I should like to point out the defects in the present edition and suggest an amended ending. Only with these amendments, suggested below, can a complete study of the work be presented. In her introduction[3] she says, “The directory of Sri Rajendralal Mitra, mentions another copy of this drama, which I failed to get....researched for another copy at several places in India, but was not successful. ....He is supposed to have written a few books out of which **Prabodhachandrodaya** has become well known to the Sanskrit world.”

A study of the text, in original, shows that she did not care to search for other available materials. She is insistent on the point that she did not get another copy and as such was obliged to edit on the basis of a single manuscript. I have come across another manuscript of the **Puranjanacharita**[4], and on a perusal of the same, it appears that there are some variants in reading too. Any edition should have been done after collating a number of manuscripts for a correct reading of the text. The description of the manuscript, on which I have relied upon, is as follows. The manuscript, written in Maithili character on white brown paper, is 11.5’’× 2.8’’, and the lines on each page vary from 6 to 7 with about 58 letters in a line. There are twenty-two pages (or folios). Sanskrit and Prakrit have been used and at places there have been partial rendering of Prakrit passages into Sanskrit. First and last folios are a little damaged, otherwise the manuscript is in a good state of preservation. In the following lines I shall bring out the differences occurring in the two, **that is**, the printed text of Miss Solanki and the manuscript on which I have relied upon.

1. The last page of the manuscript does not tally with the printed text (i.e., प्रशस्ति).
2. The manuscript, in question, is earlier than the printed text and is dated **Saka** 1701 (=1779 AD). Solanki’s text is dated Saka 1712 (=1790 AD). The date of the manuscript will be evident from the statement at the end of the work:
   शाकब्दे धरणी वियन्मुनिधरा संभासमाने शुभे
   माघेमास दिवामणौ मकरगे विष्णो स्थितौ सादरम् ।।



श्रीमन्मातुल कृष्णदत्त कृतिना यान्निर्मितं नाटकं प्रामेख्या-
तदिदं सदा द्रुततरं श्री हेमनाथ द्विजः ....

Here we have to bear in mind that in Mitra's **Notices**[5], the manuscript is dated **Saka** 1701.

The difference in reading is indicated below:

Miss Solanki's printed edition	**Manuscript (referred to by me)**
(a) P. 3, Para 1	Slightly different reading here, but no change in meaning.
(b) P. 6, Verse 15 begins with युवासुवासा	It begins as follows: गुणीसमर्थः खलुकृत्यकर्मसु युवासुवासाः....
(c) P. 10, Act II: After निष्क्रान्ता, line 16 and before प्रवेशकः on p.11	The text between these two portions is not found in the manuscript.
(d) P.11, Act II from line 15 वृत्तिमनिका to पञ्चप्रस्थवनं at the end of the page	The portion is not found in the manuscript.
(e) P.12, Verse 8, line 3 स्नेहेन प्रश्न	This is verse 7 of the **mss**, and slight change in reading is संस्नाप्य स्नेहनीरैः.
(f) P. 13 – राजा – बाढ़म्	तदुतिष्ठं
(g) P. 15, line 10; राजा- देवि पथद्वयमुपतिष्ठ	राजा- सन्दिहानइवतिष्ठति
Last line in the same page.	It is not in the **mss.**
(h) P. 19, Act III, Line 5- सवार्थपूर्णस्य	सवार्थसिद्धस्य ।
Line 13 and 14	Order changed in the **mss**, i.e., 4th line is 3rd and 3rd line is 4th With minor changes in the reading, e.g., चहसन्त्याँ, instead of विहसन्त्याँ
At the end of the same page	There is निष्क्रान्तौ, in the **mss**.
(i) P. 20- Line 4: नृपालोकिता...	नृपालोचितो....
(j) P. 24- Line 25: In the statement of अविज्ञान There is no ततस्तः in the **mss**. Verse 9 of the **Mss** between अविज्ञान and विलक्षण is missing in the printed text.	**Verse 9** रक्ताक्षोमलिनः पिकोमधुरयावाचावरंश्लाघ्यतेऽ मध्यासीकटुभाषणोऽपिसुकृताख्यानेनकाकोच्यते । सुश्लाघ्योनवलक्षणाप्रणयनादत्यन्दुष्टोऽप्यसा-

वेकःकोऽपिगुणो विलक्षणतरः स्यात् सर्वदोषपहः ।।

Then comes ततस्ततः (Folio- 16B)

(k) P. 26- Line 1 and 6: there is मालव — In the **mss** गुर्जरानाम् ।

(l) P. 30- between lines 13 and 14, few Sentences are missing here. — More lines are in the **mss** (Folio 19A)

नवलक्षणा - सेयं गोस्वामिनः परमासक्तिः

वैदर्भी - आर्येतं द्रष्टुमिच्छामि

नवलक्षणा – इदानीमेव द्रक्ष्यसि

वैदर्भी – तत्र त्वरते मे चेतो वृत्तिः

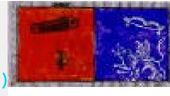
Line 20- a slight change in reading. — तदादेशय पन्थानम्

(m) P. 34- Line 10: one line is missing from the printed text. — जय जय दशविधिरुप मुरारे मंगलमय

मधुसूदन माधव करुणाकर कलुषारे । (Folio 21B)

These are some of the important variants of the two readings. They are important in so far as the correct reading of the text is concerned. So long as a third manuscript is not discovered, the text, along with the changes, suggested above remains the standard basic work of that author. There are other points to be noticed with regard to the present text and its author. Miss Solanki has confused Krsnadatta Maithila with Krsnamisra, author of the **Prabodhachandrodaya**. One may simply wonder at her amazing conclusions like the present one, as we know that these two authors were separated by more than seven centuries. Krsnamisra flourished in the 11th century AD[6], while our author belonged to the late 17th or 18th century AD. She should have borne in mind that Krsnamisra of the 11th century AD could not have been a contemporary of the Bhonslas. Solanki is also silent about another important work of Krsnadatta Maithila.

Krsnadatta was a well-known scholar of his time. He was the son of Sadarama and Ananda Devi.[7] He hailed from one of the respectable families of Maithila. Very little is known about him as is the case with other reputed scholars of the past. Even the author of the history of Tirhut, who has appended a long list of Sanskrit writers of Mithila, is silent on this point. Whether he confused our author with Krsnadatta Upadhyaya is not certain and cannot be ascertained at this stage. There is no doubt that Krsnadatta Maithila had superb scholarly qualities. His genius attracted the notice of Devaji Purushottama, the prime minister of the Bhonslas of Nagpur, who was probably his patron. Even the discerning eye of late lamented Dr K P Jayaswal failed to notice the importance of the **Puranjanacharita**. Jayaswal refers to one of his works, namely, **Kubalayasvayiannamanatakam**.[8] The **Puranjanacharita** has also been noticed by a number of scholars in their reports.[9] **Kubalayasva** was completed in **Saka** 1705 (=1783 AD). So, even the manuscript of his second drama, found in Mithila, is earlier than the text used by Miss Solanki. Both these manuscripts show that Krsnadatta was a reputed author of the 18th century.



Our author had the genius of writing allegorical drama and his style certainly reminds one of Kalidasa, Bana, Krsnamisra and Jayadeva. The **Puranjanacharita** relates the story of Puranjana of the **Bhagavatapurana**, though a few new characters have been brought in. Following the footsteps of Krsnamisra, our author here extols the cult of **Bhakti** through his drama, the object of which is to promote devotion to Lord Krisna. In his description of the **Dasavatara** of Visnu, one is reminded of the marvellous poetic style of Jayadeva. **Kubalayasva** is based on the story found in **Brahmapurana**. Though an entertaining farce this drama, in seven Acts, relates the love of a Vedic student and a maiden, Madalasa and Sandrakutuhala. These two works show that our author took his plots from the **Puranas**. A few lines from **Kubalayasva**, as noticed by Jayaswal in his Catalogue, are quoted below for reference.

Beginning: ऊँ नमोगणेशाय ।।

भाल प्रज्ज्वल दक्षिकैतवसती विश्लेषवैश्वानर-

ज्वालावर्तित सौर सैन्धवपयः फेनैक लेखेव या

या गौरी मिलने पुनः पुरजिता दध्रे स्वमौलौना

प्रस्नः पल्लवितस्य पुष्पकलिका सापातुतान्त्रीकला ।।

अपिच ।

End: आनन्दं प्राप्नुवन्ति प्रतिपदमतुलं स्वेष्टलाभेन लोकाः ।

पृथ्वीन्द्राः यान्तुपृथ्वीं पृथुनय यशसः सस्य सम्पतिपृथ्वीं

कालेकालेतड़ित्वानमृतरसः वृष्टिमिष्टां विधतां

श्रीविश्वेशप्रसादत्प्रचरतु परितः सत्कवेः सूक्तिरत्नं

भरतः एवमस्तु ।। इति निष्क्रान्ताः सर्वे ।।

Colophon: शाके 1705 मार्गशुक्ल पञ्चदश्यॉं चन्द्रवासरे

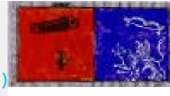
मिश्रश्री शुभनाथ शर्मसुधियः शब्दागमेऽधीतिनः ।

शीलाचार दयाविचार विनयाधारस्य संप्रीतये

श्रीकाश्यॉंपरिपूर्यनाचकमिदं श्रीकृष्णदत्तोऽलिख

च्छन्दार्थस्सखलनं कृताविह लिपौवर्णच्युतिः शोध्यताम् ।।

विषय - मदालसाकुवलयाश्वयोश्चरित्रवर्णनम् ।



We have the following quotations from Mitra's **Notices** – VI; Mss No. 2035[10]:

विषय - प्रथमांके -- काशीराज आरुह्यतमनुस सार

द्वितीयांके -- समिदाहरणाय निष्क्रान्तइति

तृतीयांके -- मन्दारिका परिणयवर्णनञ्च

चतुर्थांके -- पुण्यंशीलस्य वर्णनञ्च

पञ्चमांके -- देवब्राह्मण सूचना

षष्ठयांके -- पातालकेतुसहोदस्य प्रवेशकथनं

सप्तमांके -- नागकुमार महोत्सववर्णनञ्च

The story, in brief, is that a Vedic student Kabalayasva fell in love with a maiden named Madalasa. The maiden is carried away to the nether regions, whence she is rescued by a king of Kasi and restored to her lover.

The Raj Library **MSS** of this nataka is written in Devanagari character and is in a book form on a foolscap paper. The size is 13.2'' × 8.5''. Though the appearance is not very old, the last page is wretched. It seems to have been copied from another manuscript. The language is both Sanskrit and Prakit. There is some difference here, when compared with Jayaswal's and Mitra's **Catalogue** and **Notices** respectively.

Beginning: ॐ नमोमहिषामर्दिन्यै-

x x x x

नान्ध्यतेसूत्रधारः ।।2।।

अलमति विस्तरेण । पुरोऽवलोक्य ।

End: (in the IVth Act – this shows that this **mss** is incomplete.)

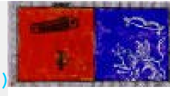
राजा- द्वितीयं पुनरिदमाशङ्का स्थानं दिवता

पूजामामना सङ्गोमनो प्रश्नतिश्च किञ्चिद्

निमितं सूचयति तदस्य प्रतिशतिं किं ....

.... मित्युदीरतिसन्तस्तकी यन्तां हयहरित हेमधेनु

The writer Krsnadattakavi is mentioned in the Drama.



A critical edition of this drama, on the basis of all available mss, will be an invaluable addition to the store house of Sanskrit literature. From the study of above facts about a particular author in the 18th century, it appears that classical Sanskrit still inspired the writers in late a period and held the field. The unbroken continuity of Sanskrit literature is well-illustrated by these facts.

*In the preparation of this work, I have secured sufficient help from my erstwhile student, Sri Umakant Thakur, M A, now PhD.

5. CHINA, TIBET, NEPAL & THE CAPITAL OF TIRABHUKTI (647-702 AD)

The history of Tirabhukti after the death of Harsavardhana in 647 AD is yet an unsettled enigma in view of the obscurity and conflicting nature of the sources. Scholars right from the late Sylvain Levi to the present-day researchers on the subject have hazarded conjecture to suit their own point of view. Though Devahuti has translated into English all the relevant Chinese sources, the problem of identification of the names remains as it was and recently a good deal of debate has taken place on this issue resulting in further confusion.[1] It must be said at the very outset that the fact of invasion of Tirabhukti by the Tibeto-Nepalese army is now almost settled beyond any shadow of doubt and we now cannot reject it as a figment of somebody's imagination.

It was only after the assumption of title '**King of Magadha**' by Harsa that he established diplomatic contacts with China as a counterpoise to Pulkesin's relation with Persia. Exchange of envoys between Tang dynasty and Harsa made his position more stable. Arjuna is said to be a Brahmana of Tirhut[2] and a vassal of Harsavardhana. Sen suggests his vassalage to Harsa[3] who was rightly conscious of a foreign embassy visiting India through his kingdom. The Chinese account is as follows[4]:

*"In the 22nd year Wang ....was sent to India as an envoy. ....Siladitya died by the time. ....They were just left a few scores of cavalry to follow. **The fighting resulted in a defeat**, all of them were exterminated, the articles ....were plundered. Only Hsuan-Tse straightened himself and **ran away to the western frontier of Tibet** and summoned the troops of the neighbouring countries. Tibet responded with one thousand soldiers and Nepal with seven hundred cavalry. Huan Tse and a portion of his army advanced towards the city of Chapaholo and captured it in three days. ....*

*Ah-lo-na-hsun abandoned the country and fled. **He reassembled his scattered army** and went in battle again. Shih-Jen (Wang's deputy) captured him and beheaded one thousand persons in all. The remaining people who blocked the passage of the **Kantowei** river for the safety of the king's wife were attacked by Shih-Jen who destroyed them totally and captured the king's wife and princess. Five hundred eighty towns surrendered. The king of Eastern India **Shih-Chin-Mo** (Srikumara) **sent thirty thousand oxen and horses to feed the army, and also bows/swords and precious fringes.** The country of Kia-mo-lo presented extraordinary products and a map to the emperor, he also requested for a statue of Lao-Tsu. Hsuan-Tse seized Alo-na-hsun and presented him before the emperor."*

This, in brief, is the account maintained in the Chinese annals of the Tang dynasty.

There are a number of problems connected with the issue. To my mind the following issues emerge after going through the sources:

i. History of the region after the death of Harsa;
ii. Identification of the place of battle;
iii. The role of the neighbouring states;
iv. The route followed by the Chinese ambassador; and
v. The question of the capital of Tirabhukti.

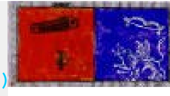
I

Taking the issue No. (i.) into consideration, we see that Harsa died issueless and there appears on the scene a period of uncertainty in the political horizon of north India. The empire disintegrated as would be evident from the following political structure. Tirabhukti formed a part of Harsa's empire (one of the five Indies of the Chinese pilgrims) and as such among the list of contemporary kings, the name of Tirabhukti does not figure separately.

Magadha continued to be regarded as the seat of imperial power by the Chinese emperor and Hasa wished to be recognised as such by his foreign contemporary with whom he had exchanged diplomatic missions. After Harsa's death, Madhavagupta of Magadha asserted his independence and is believed to have resisted Arunasva's ambition of getting himself recognised as Harsa's legatee. Whether he wishes to be recognised as such or as an independent king of Tirhut and consequently of Harsa's empire as a whole, is a point to be investigated into.

Between 600-700 AD Bhaskarvarmana and Salasthambha Vijaya were ruling in Assam, Thakuri Amsuvarmana and Jisnugupta and Lichchavi Sivadeva and his successors in Nepal, Khagdodyama and his successors in Vanga-Samtata, Jayanaga and Sasanka in Gauda, Sailodhava kings in Orissa and later Gupta Madhavagupta and his successors in Magadha. This is indicative of the fact that centralisation secured under Harsa vanished like a house of cards and the ground was ready for all types of political adventurers' marches and counter-marches. Tirabhukti does not figure as a political power or even as a centre of politics except in the sense that it was being ruled by the governor of Harsa named Ajuna or Arunasva. If Tirabhukti's geographical limit as set by Sung-yun is accepted then in the early part of the sixth century AD, it had wider geographical connotation. **Tieh-lo** (identified with Tirhut or Tirabhukti) was the fortieth province, south of China, visited by Sung-yun and it formed part of the Huna empire.[5]

Harsa's five Indies included Tirabhukti – region from Gandaka to Mahananda. Even Hiuentsang does not mention the name of any ruler of Tirabhukti though he does so with regard to Magadha. He found Vaisali and Chansuna (Janakpur) desolate. Chansuna (or Janakpur) was the capital of the old Vrijjian kingdom, was about three hundred miles in circuit and the inhabitants had mostly discarded Buddhism. This is an evidence of the fact that Tirabhukti had by now lost its political importance, had nothing of



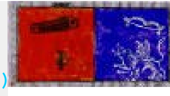
Buddhism left and though comprising a very big territory, was bereft of all political importance except that Harsa had posted his governor here to keep an eye on his adversaries on the south of the Ganges and also on the east. We know that Tirabhukti was a royal province under the Guptas and was ruled by the Yuvaraja. Harsa continued this tradition and appointed Arjuna (possibly a local Brahmana ruler as the Chinese suggest, or a scion or a distant relation of the Guptas) as his Governor. Tiabhukti included both Mithila and Vaisali of the early period. The non-mention of both, Mithila or Tirabhukti, as an independent political unit in the post-Gupta and Harsa period is a factor to reckon with in so far as the political history of this period is concerned. It comes into political limelight because of Wang's military activities in collaboration with Tibet and Nepal. Wang was a Chinese ambassador deputed by the emperor of the Court of Harsa but Arjuna interfered with mission's activities. Harsa's relation with China was a counterpoise to Pulkesin's friendship with Persia.[6]

II

The second important issue relating to our purpose here is the identification of the place of battle. We have seen above that Sung-yun used Tieh-Lo for Tirhut. The Chinese words for Tirabhukti between 812 and 1254 AD are:

i. TINAFUTI or NAFU or NAFUTI
ii. CHAPOHOLO
iii. CH APOHOLO
iv. TUPOHOLO

Tinafuti (or Nafu or Nafuti) is identified with Davaka in Nowgong district by Levi. According to Professor Chang Hsing-Lang, it was situated to the north-east of Kannauj (**82' longitude and 28' latitude**) and it is said to be a capital city lying on the northern bank of the Kiapili river.* Misra identifies (ii), (iii) and (iv) with Svetapur. Hiuentsang describes SHI-FEI-TO-PO-LO as a **Sangharama** and scholars identify it with Svetapur. Y Misra bases his identification on the authority of HUI-LI, biographer of Hiuentsang. He further holds that Arjuna had his headquarters at Svetapur and even Tibetans maintained it[7], though he does not provide us with any evidence of its being maintained by the Tibetans. By one stretch of imagination, he has further identified Svetapur with a newly discovered archaeological site Chechar – a contention that has been rightly contested by the renowned linguist Subhadra Jha. He says[8] that neither CHAPOHOLO can be Svetapur, nor Svetapur Chechar on philological grounds. He calls Chechar a cemetery. He further queries: '**How can Gupta Vaisnava make a Buddhist centre his capital?**' According to Hiuentsang, it was a Buddhist **Sangharama** and how can a **Sangharama** be a capital and that so of a specially conservative Maithila. It is said to be a favourite resort of the Buddha but even as such Svetapur is nowhere mentioned in Indian literature. Why? Even with regard to its old name there are differences among the scholars. Some scholars believe that its old name was Nadikagrama or Nadigrama while a recent scholar has identified the entire area with **Kotigrama**[9] – a place further identified by Misra with Raghopur Diara. Thus it appears that there is no unanimity among the scholars about the place where the battle between the Tibetans, Nepalese and the Tirabhukti forces took place. The Chinese records maintain that the battle took place at **Chapoholo** – but its identification yet remains a problem and Svetapur is no solution.

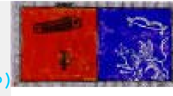


Wang is believed to have stormed the chief city of Tirhut, that is, the headquarters of the provincial governor. If we are to rely on the authenticity of Waddel's statement[10], and for the time being there is nothing to contradict it, the capital city of Tirabhukti was the same as that of the Vrijjis, meaning thereby that it was somewhere in Mithila itself and not elsewhere. Devahuti[11] suggests that Wang led the troops to CHAPOHOLO City **which was where Central India is or where the King of Central India resided**. She has possibly followed the suggestions made by Prof Chang Hsing-lang. Even after studying all the relevant Chinese sources, she is not in a position to state categorically where this city exactly lay. After all we cannot place Tirabhukti or for that matter any other part of the then Bihar in Central India. Wang fought a number of battles with the help of the Tibetan and Nepali forces. On being intercepted by Arjuna, Wang had gone to south-west Tibet and if that point is accepted then Chapoholo's identification by Prof Chang Hsing-lang appears to be more correct. He captured **580 cities, towns and villages**. It is natural that the area must have been densely populated and there must have been a cluster of villages. The description of towns and cities appear hyperbolical.

The difficulty is that even today we not in a position to locate the site of the government headquarters where Arjuna lived or ruled. Bagchi[12] calls Arjuna the king of Tirabhukti. If the suggestion of his being a native Brahmana ruler or a scion of the Guptas be accepted, it may be surmised that as a ruling chief of the area he was appointed governor by Harsa on his conquest of Tirabhukti. Taking pride in his royal origin, he wanted submission of Wang before him which led to the conflict. Because of the difficulty in rendering Chinese words into Indian equivalents, much confusion has arisen. **CHAPOHOLO** is also sometimes identified with Champaran situated on the bank of Gandaki or **CHIEN-TO-WEI** of the Chinese and sometimes with Central India. This has presented difficulties in the problem of identification. This rive was first to the west and then to the north of the Ganges. Another Chinese source[13] located **CHAPOHOLO** on the bank of river CHIEN-TO-WEI which MATWALIN identifies with Ganga. On the authority of HSIN-TANG-SHUN, it has been suggested that the river CHIEN-TO-WEI was to the north of the country of TO-WEI. This country is yet to be identified. V A Smith[14] equates CHAPOHOLO with Tirhut and CHIEN-TO-WEI with Bagmati. Amaravati in Mithila (now popularly known as Raima) is on the east of river Balan which directly flows into the Ganges. It is a deep river and hardly changes its course and is navigable throughout the year. This area on the western bank of Balan from Koilakh in the north to Mau Bajitpur in the south was an important urban centre of trade and commerce in the early period of Tirabhukti's history. This town of Amaravati had close commercial link with Nepal and Tibet.

Being an important centre of Vedic culture, the people of Tirabhukti shifted from Janakpur to Amaravati for obvious reasons and it continued to be an important centre of culture till the medieval period. Balirajgarh lies on the eastern bank of Balan and its excavation may throw some light on the contemporary history. Traditional sources suggest that the town of Amaravati was destroyed by the Tibetans and again restored by the Karnatas. Various mounds still await excavator's spade. This area is situated in the centre and heart of Mithila, what during the period under review, was known as Tirabhukti with Sravasti-bhukti on the west, Pundravardhanbhukti on the east and Srinagarabhukti on the south.

The entire history of Tirabhukti in the Gupta and post-Gupta period is associated with the river banks and valleys. Mithila has a number of rivers like Gandaka, Lakhander, Bagmati, Jibach, Tilyuga, Balan,

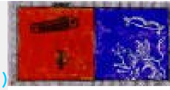


Kamla, Kosi and others and the whole range of Maithili folk lore is replete with river songs showing how deeply the people's life was attached with the river tract. It was in between these rivers that politics and culture of Mithila originated and developed. The very name Tirabhukti is an indication of this fact.[14a] Viewed geographically, Amaravati-Balirajgarh complex lay in the centre of Mithila. From strategic point of view, Arjuna must have shifted himself to a safer place like Amaravati and placed himself at the head of the government here after his appointment by Harsa as such. Harsa, being politician and a conqueror, must have selected a local man to be his governor in this region which was co-terminus with three district administrative units on three sides and must have fixed his capital at a place in the heart of it. The case of Amaravati is more appropriate in this context and the battle must have taken place in this densely populated area. Unless the Chinese names for rivers and places are not scientifically deciphered and identified and further evidences are not forthcoming, my submission is that Amaravati should be taken as the scene of battle between the forces of Arjuna and the Tibetan army.

III

The third issue relates to the role of the neighbouring states in this conflict. As stated earlier, the contemporary powers in north India raised their heads after the demise of Harsa and made a bid for supremacy. Arjuna was no exception. He simply wanted recognition of the status enjoyed by his erstwhile master. It was natural that other contemporary rulers, independent of Harsa or otherwise, should challenge Arjuna on this score. When Arjuna asked Wang Hiuen-tse to treat him as such and present his credential, the Chinese ambassador probably refused and that is why he was attacked. Madhavagupta of Magadha resisted the pretensions of Arjuna. Arjuna might have foreseen that the successful arrival of the mission would raise the prestige of the later Gupta king of Magadha and that may be one of the reasons of his attack against the embassy. Magadha was a well-known name among the foreigners and had a prestige even in the post-Gupta period – a position which Tirabhukti had not yet acquired, since it formed a part of the Magadha Empire. Arjuna's miscalculation about the helplessness of the embassy brought Tirabhukti under the heels of Tibetan imperialism.

Here it should be noted that the conquest of Tirabhukti should not be construed as conquest of central India. The whole thing was a localised affair and we do not hear of any echo of this episode anywhere in the country except a reference to Bhaskarvarmana's help to the embassy. Srikumara (identified with Bhaskaravarmana) sent a gift of thirty thousand oxen and horses as provisions for the army and also bows, swords and spears. He also offered curiosities to the Emperor and a map of the country but wanted in return a picture of Lao-tsu. Bhaskaravarmana was a friend of Harsa but at the same time an ambitious man who possibly thought it prudent to keep the Chinese mission at bay by extending his hands of friendship. According to Tang Annals, when Wang Hiuen-tse was pillaged by the Indians, Nepal came to his rescue along with Tibet. It may be noted here that Wang was already acquainted with India as he made several visits before and after this incident. He came here in 643, 647, 657 and 664 AD and his account now survives only in quotation. When he was attacked by Arjuna, he fled to the south-west of Tibet and collected troops from the neighbouring countries and in three days of continuous fighting and in a number of battles defeated Arjuna. Since he was an imperial envoy to India he had an international status and both Tibet and Nepal (who were friends and so was China) helped him in that

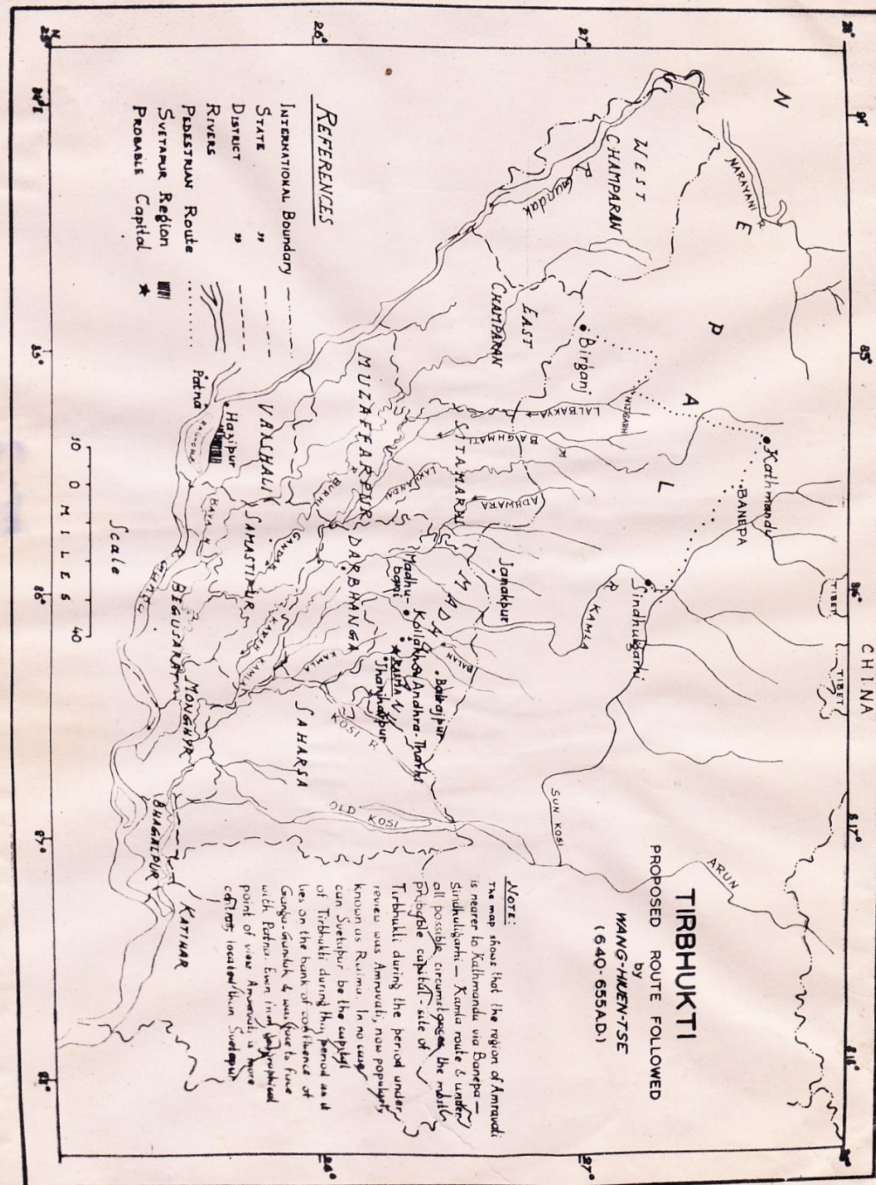


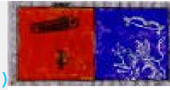
capacity. Loss on the Indian side was heavy. The people of Tirabhukti rallied round his (Arjuna's) wife and children and barred the passage to the river but all to no purpose before the superior arms of the Tibetan-Nepalese forces. On Harsa's death this ruler of Tirhut (if we accept him as such) was treated as an usurper by the army and naturally he did not get any support in seizing the throne of Harsa. Even the adjoining kingdoms or even the former vassals (he himself was one such vassal) did not help him. Rather they defied his authority. That is why, Wang had an easy victory. There is a reference to this episode of Wang's victory in the **Red Annals** (published by the Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, 1961. The quotation is found in the Tibetan version. Sen; op.cit., p.5 fn; Sen, pp. 11, 28 ff). Wang had an idea of north Bihar as during his first visit in 643, he had visited Vimalkirti's house in Vaisali.

On the basis of a single Tibetan source, Luciano Petech says that there is no mention of Indian campaign or even intervention in Indian affairs by Srong. Petech asserts that a king of Tibet died a little after 702 AD during a campaign against Nepal and the people of Indian frontier that had rebelled against him.[15] R C Mazumdar thinks that Srong was already in India and Wang's campaign was merely a part of Indian campaign of the Tibetan King.[16] The question is how would the Indian people rebel against the Tibetans if they had no authority here. Thus Petech's own suggestion is indicative of the admission of the fact that Srong had political control over India at the time of his death. It appears that between 647 and 702 AD the Tibetans had involved themselves in the politics of Nepal and North India and with the decline of Srong's authority, the people of Tirabhukti under the leadership of the later Guptas revolted against the Tibetan authority, wrested the area of Tirabhukti and annexed it to the Magadha empire. The Katra[17] inscription of Jivagupta (C. 8th century AD) is important from this point of view. It was issued from the Jayaskandhavara Taravasila and it belonged to a local ruling family of North Bihar, possibly connected with the later Guptas of Magadha. It mentions Tirabhukti as the administrative headquarters with the name of Chamunda Visaya under it. The inscription seems to have been issued after the vacation of Tibetan aggression through the efforts of the later Guptas.

IV

Now the fourth issue relates to the question of route followed by the Chinese ambassador. An indication of route would help us in setting some of the tangled webs of contemporary history of Tirabhukti which is yet in a state of flux. A Chinese pilgrim[18] Hiuen Chao came to India in 627 AD by Tibetan route and after the discovery of this route, a large number of Chinese monks travelled to India via Tibet-Nepal-Tirabhukti routes. There was another route from Pataliputra, Champa, Kajangala, Pundravardhana and Kamrup popularly known as Assam Burma route which was brought into use during the second World War (1939-45). Hsuan-Chao discovered the Turfan-Nepal route – a new way from China to India through Tibet and Nepal. This route was later followed by Indian monks coming to China. Eighth century Chinese pilgrim Hui Chao (729 AD) wrote a record of the visit to the five countries of India (obviously including Tirabhukti which was one of the five Indies of the Chinese).[19] The Tibet-Nepal route was followed by Srong's army and was later used by a host of successive travellers. Wang is believed to have passed through Deopatan in 646 AD following the Banepa-Kuti route.[20] This route offered all facilities to Tibet to learn Indian culture. It became the principal thoroughfare of all cultural and commercial contacts


TIRBHUKTI
PROPOSED ROUTE FOLLOWED
by
WANG-HUEN-TSE
(640-655 A.D.)
NEPAL
CHINA
REFERENCES
International Boundary
State
District
Rivers
Pedestrian Route
Svetapur Region
Probable Capital
Scale
10 0 MILES 40
WEST CHAMPARAN
EAST CHAMPARAN
MUZAFFARPUR
VAISHALI
SITAMARHI
MADHUBANI
DARBHANGA
SAMASTIPUR
BEGUSARAI
MONGHYR
SAHARSA
BHAGALPUR
KATIHAR
Kathmandu
BANEPA
Sindhulgarhi
Birganj
Janakpur
Patna
Hajipur
Baharpur
NARAYANI
BAGHMATI
LALBAKYA
ADHWARA
KAMLA
KOSI R
OLD KOSI
SUN KOSI
ARUN
Note:



between the two countries. Nepal valley was the only connecting link between India and the Tibetan highlands.

There was no more convenient opening to Tibetan region than Kathmandu, Kerraung, Nepal-Kuti routes and Tibetan invaders in 647 AD had passed through this route to suppress the rebellious governor of Tirabhukti. The most frequented route in the early period was through Janakpur. From there one could ascend the hill of Sindhuli and then proceed due west to Bhatgaon passing Banepa en route. Both up and down journeys were channelled through this route.[21] Tirabhukti was the only and the most important opening for Nepal (and for that matter) Tibet on the Indian side and the Nepalese preferred easier routes through Janakpur and Makwanpur than through the hilly regions via Birganj. Motihari or Champaran was also known as one of the routes but a difficult one. The rivers in the heart of Tirabhukti are fordable and navigable and the Nepalese and Tibetan traders used to frequent these routes. Wang must have followed the well-known frequented routes while carrying the Tibetan and Chinese forces and the nearness of the battle scene from Kamrup might have enabled Srikumar[22] to send necessary supplies to him.

The commentator of **Tzu-Chih-Tung-Chien**[23] says that the river Chien-To-Wei was first to the west and then to the north of the Ganges. It should be noted here that the commentator is speaking from the Chinese-Tibetan-Nepalese angle, as anybody coming from that side (that from north to south) either from Janakpur-Sindhuligarh route or from Makwanpur route would find all rivers like Balan, Bagmati and Gandak to the west and then to the north of the Ganges. A traveller from that route will reach the Ganges somewhere on the southern frontier of Tirabhukti. To my mind, the identification of Chien-To-Wei with Bagmati (Smith and Vaidya) seems more probable than with Gandaki as is made out to be by other scholars including Devahuti and Misra. This sentence of the commentator need not confuse us if we view it from the Chinese-Tibetan angle in the context of the history of Tirabhukti whose capital had shifted sometime in the post-Gupta period from Janakpur (Vaisali) to Amaravati in the heart of Mithila. About twenty-five Chinese authorities have been quoted by Devahuti but they are not unanimous about the actual site. The only point where the scholars are unanimous is that the scene of activity of Wang's mission and Tibetan invaders must have been somewhere between Gandaki on the west and Kausiki on the east. All these rivers originate in Nepal and after traversing through the region of Tirabhukti fall into the Ganges. These rivers constitute the life blood of the people of this region.

V

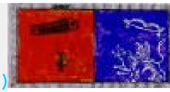
The last issue that remains to be settled in this connection is the question of the capital of Tirabhukti on which Misra[24] has made so much fuss for nothing. Beal mentions that the people of the north called themselves '**SAN-FA-SHI**' (or **Samvajji**) or **SAN-FA-CHIH** (Watters; II. P. 81). Videha covered almost the same region as did Tirabhukti. Mithila was the capital of Videha with its headquarters at Janakpur. It was only in medieval times that the use of the appellation of Mithila for the whole country is attested along with Tirabhukti. Today it is indicated on linguistic grounds by north Bihar, the Terai and the southern portion of the kingdom of Nepal inclusive of the lower ranges of the hills. It was in the Gupta period that Mithila and Vaisali were jointly called Tirabhukti or CHAPPOHOLO (or Tieh-lo or NAFUTI) of the Chinese.

The identification of the CHAPOHOLO with Tirhut is doubtful in view of Sung-yun's identification of Tirhut with Tieh-lo, which appears to be more correct.

Tirabhukti was an important province of the Gupta empire and was under the royal princes.[25] The Guptas attached great importance to this province which, besides being an important administrative centre, was an important centre of trade and commerce. It was under the patronage of the Gupta rulers that Tirabhukti again came under the Brahmanical influence and Buddhism declined. Vaisali lost its original importance as centre of Buddhism but continued to be important for sometime more because of economic and administrative activities. The revival of Brahmanism under the Guptas enabled the people of Tirabhukti to shift their cultural headquarters to the heart of Mithila near Amaravati-Balirajagarh complex. The recent but incomplete excavations at Balirajagarh and the stray finds throughout the region show that by and large the area around the above complex had assumed sufficient political importance during the period. Political independence (in the sense of the Janakas) was now a thing of the past but their cultural activities continued to grow unfettered even during and after the Gupta rule.

Between 550 and 1097 AD, there was a period of uncertainty in the history of Mithila as it continued to form part of the one kingdom or the other and had no independent status necessitating the creation of a capital for the state as Janakpur was in the past. The administrative centre, after the decline of Vaisali, was shifted to Balirajagarh area – being the central place in the geographical context. Under the circumstances, the question of an independent capital for Mithila between 550 and 1097 does not arise at all. After Harsa's death, Tirabhukti remained under the control of the Tibetans till 702 AD and was made independent by the later Guptas. Even after this incident Tirabhukti continued to be pressed on all sides by those claimants who were struggling for supremacy in the region. In the face of these facts when the scene of political history was moving like cinematography, one fails to understand if Mithila or Tirabhukti enjoyed any independent status at all. The term 'Maithila' or 'Tirhut' or 'Tirabhukti' used in inscriptions, Yasasatilaka's Champu, Taranatha are indicative of the cultural contour of the area and not of political identity as such. Hence the question of a separate capital as such does not arise. There were certain towns and places and the most important of them having both political and cultural significance was Amaravati-Balirajagarh complex.

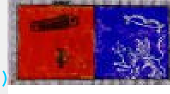
Even if one agrees with Misra and accepts that there was a capital of Tirabhukti during the period, and that was **CHAPOHOLO**, the normal course is to tentatively accept that Harsa might have made Chapoholo the capital of his governor and not of Tirabhukti as a whole. Keeping in view the strategic and commercial importance of Chapoholo, Harsa might have thought it wise to place his representative at the famous Buddhist site on the north of the Ganges to keep an eye on recalcitrant Magadha which could not come under him before 641. Since Magadha had international recognition, it was to the emperor of Magadha that China had sent ambassador who was intercepted by Arjuna on the north of the Ganges, does it prove Misra's contention that Svetapur was the capital of Tirhut from 550 to 1097 AD? The question arises – Why a ruler of Tirabhukti have his capital at Svetapur (opposite, and not in the interior or central place inside the state)? Why should a ruler of Tirhut go all the way from its north borders (having strategic cum commercial importance) to the extreme south for establishing his capital at a time when the political situation was in a state of flux? Tirabhukti was under the throes of



upheavals and political adventurers were trying to fish in the troubled waters. There was no fixity of capital, no fixed king or dynasty and even the political boundary shifted with every conqueror and the change was so swift that it was difficult to predict one while the other occurred. Had Svetapur been the capital of Mithila, it must have found mention somewhere either in literary tradition (as is the case with various capitals in the medieval period) or in any other sources. Svetapur cannot be the capital of Tirhut for the reasons stated below:

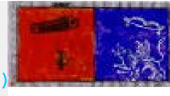
i. Svetapur is believed to be an ancient Buddhist site associated with Buddha and Ananda;
ii. It was a place of hallowed memory for the Buddhists and had nothing of administrative importance, though it was situated on an important river trade route and strategically important;
iii. In the time of Hiuentsang, it was an important Sangharama – a Sangharama cannot be a fit place for being used as a capital of any state. Even Hiuentsang does not mention anything of political importance about this place;
iv. After the decline of Vaisali and in view of its importance as a river-route, Svetapur might have acquired some economic importance but it had nothing to do with politics. **Chapoholo** is said to be situated on river **Chiehpiti** (identified with Ganga). Why should a ruler of Tirabhukti shift or establish his capital (if at all there was one) on the bank of the Ganges far removed from the heart of Tirhut? The very identification of Chapoholo with Svetapur is doubtful as it is said to have been situated north-east of Kannauj;
v. Even on religious grounds, a Hindu cannot select a Buddhist place of importance as his capital. So-called Svetapur identified with Chechar by Misra, on the basis of various finds and other source, appear to have been a place of importance having continuous history for more than a thousand years no doubt but it had nothing of importance as being the political capital of any state so far. To call it a capital of Mithila is nothing more than a figment of imagination, keeping in view the facts and circumstances stated above in this paper. Frankly speaking, we are not yet in a position to locate accurately the site of the administrative headquarters of Arjuna. The Panchobh inscription of Sangramagupta describes Sangramagupta as descended from Arjuna but his lineage is not known to us. It appears that Arjuna's descendant after sometime acquired position of importance in Tirhut and Terai area. The Katra Copperplate refers, though doubtfully, to some connection with Arjuna. Line 20 of the Panchobh Copperplate refers to one **Chamundaraja** (possibly Damodaragupta) also called **Amarapurinathadideva** (line 21). The later Guptas appears to have been the lord of **Amarapuri** (in Tirabhukti) or Amaravati. Chamunda was one of the Visayas of Tirabhukti and its ruler, Chamundaraja took pride in describing himself as such. They seem to have restored the destroyed city of Amaravati after Tibetan yoke was over.

Thus on the basis of above arguments, as gleaned through various sources, it appears that Wang was ill-treated on his arrival here. He returned and sought the aid of the Tibetans and the Nepalese and invaded India, of course, with the co-operation of Tibet, Nepal and Kamrup, defeated Arjuna and took him to China. Tibetans enjoyed the fruit of this attack for another fifty-two years. Wang visited India twice after this episode. He was promoted. He took with him scholars well versed in art



and music. The flow of cultural material continued from India during the Tang period. The Chinese sent missions to India to collect the technique of sugar making, and also medicines and herbs.[26] The rise of the later Guptas marked the decline of Tibetan authority in Tirabhukti, which appears to have formed part of the later Gupta empire of Magadha. Wang destroyed the headquarters of the provincial Governor Arjuna which to my view was located in the heart of Mithila and nearer to Assam from where he could get his supplies without much difficulty. Until the Chinese names are correctly and satisfactorily deciphered and other satisfactory evidences are forthcoming, I feel that it was Amaravati, and not Svetapur, that was destroyed by Wang.

*Sen; op.cit., 4, fn 2. Lang's identification is based on a map drawn by Japanese cartographer Ishi Zawa; Also, p.51.



NOTES

CHAPTER I: SOURCES

[1] **Bhagwata-P**. II. 7.34; IX. 23.5; Cf. IA – XXVIII, P.4.

[2] **Divyavadana**; IX. 2.6.

[3] **Sabhaparva**; XXX. Cf. Sorensen; Index, pp. 547, 567.

[4] **Bhismaparva**; IX. 358, 365.

[5] **Natyasastra**; XIII. 32-34.

[6] ABORI – XII; 109-10.

[7] G D College Bulletin No 2. Rahul Sankrityayana; Buddhacharya, pp.144-45, 150; Cf. G P Malalsekhar; Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, s v Anguttarapa.

[8] IHQ – XXV, No 2. Some scholars believe that Karusha also lay between Videha and Kosala.

[9] R Sankrityayana; Puratattvanibandhavali, pp. 254-55.

[10] R K Choudhary; G D College Bulletin Series, No 1, 2, 4.

[11] Ibid; No 4.

[12] Ibid; No 4.

[13] JBRS.

[14] **Prakritapainglam**, Ed. C M Ghose; Bibliotheca Indica 148, Calcutta, 1902.

[15] Cf. My paper, 'Vidyapati's Purusapariksa – An Important Source of Our Political History', Journal of Oriental Thought (Nasik), I.iv.13-28.

[16] History and Culture of the Indian People (HCIP); Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, IV.61, V.63; Cf. Ppm, p.296.

[17] Epigraphia Indica (EI); II.2; Cf. R K Choudhary, History of Bihar, p.100; Upendra Thakur, History of Mithila, p.215ff.

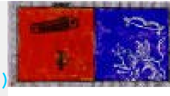
[18] EI, VII. 85, 93; DHNI, II. 747.

[19] EI, XXIX. 48 ff.

[20] R K Choudhary, G D College Bulletin, No 1; JBRS, XXXVII. 1 ff; VII. I (1963).

[21] MB. I. 146.

[22] H C Ray, Dynastic History of North India (DHNI), II. 787.



[23] Cf. 'The Karnatas of Mithila' by the present writer in the ABORI, XXXV. 91 ff; and Jayaswal's article in the JBORS, IX and X.

[24] **Ppm**. P. 244, verse I, 145: जहा-

भंज भंजिय बंगा भंगु कलिंगा तेलंगा रण मुक्कि चले

मरहठ्ठा धिठ्ठा लग्गिअ कठ्ठा सोरठ्ठाभअ पाअ चले।

चंपारण कंपा पव्वअ झंपा ओत्था ओत्थी जीवहरे

कासीसर राणा किअउ पआणा विज्जाहर भरण मंतिबरे ।।

[25] EI, VII. 93 ff.

[26] HCIP, V. 53. The latest work on the Gahadwalas, Ram Niyogi's 'History of Gahadawala Dynasty', Calcutta, 1959, fails to make any reference to the Karnatas of Mithila or to the **Ppm**.

[27] Ppm, p. 244, verse I. 145.

[28] Ibid; p. 318, verse I. 198.

[29] Ibid; p.318, verse I. 198. Nanya's forefathers were already settled in the territory as feudal baons of their southern masters. If the Mithila tradition is to be relied upon, Nanya had to make a journey to Magadha to show cause as to why his illegal acquisition of wealth, unearthed in Mithila, should not be confiscated. Magadha was under the Gahadawalas (especially Patna and Shahabad) while North Bihar (Mithila) was under the Palas who were now counting their days of existence. The **Ppm** account cannot be rejected outright. The Tirhut contemporaries of the Gahadawalas were the Karnatas.

[30] Ibid; p. 137, verse I. 77; p. 450, verse II. 132.

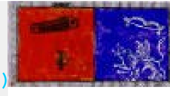
[31] Ibid; p. 244, verse I. 145; p. 289, verse I. 180.

[32] Ibid; p. 318, verse I, 198.

[33] Ibid; p. 244, verse I. 145.

[34] HCIP, V. 53.

[35] We learn that while at Munger, Govindachandra granted on the occasion of the Aksaya-Trtiya festival the village of Potacavad in the Pandal Pattala to Thakkura Sridhara (Cf. **EI**. VII). It may be mentioned here that there was one Sridhara Kayastha who was the chief minister of Nanyadeva and who served also under his son Gangadeva. He was the son of Mandalika Batudas and was also associated with the court of Laksmanasena. He was the compiler of the famous anthology **Saduktikaranamrta**. He had a proverbially long life and was an ascetic bent of mind. During the rule of the Karnatas, the Kayasthas of Mithila were also called Thakkuras. We have an inscription of Sridhara Kayastha at Andhratharhi (Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar', p. 124). The word Thakkura implied 'fief-holder'. Thakkura is even now used after the name of every Kayastha by the Panjikaras at the time of the Siddhanta (a ceremony held inconnection with the marriage negotiation). I am tempted to identify Pandal-Pattala with the modern Pandoul (N E Railway) in the district of old Darbhanga. If this identification beaccepted, it may be surmised that the grant was made to Sridhara Thakkura in recognition of his learning which had become well-



known by that time. It is no wonder that his scholarship attracted the notice of the king of Bngal and Govindachandra did not lag behind in honouring the great scholar. He must have done so with the consent of the ruling Karnata king either by purchasing the land for gift or by consent. There is another Gahadawala king Vijayachandra who is known to us as Malladeva mentioned in the **Rambhamanjarinataka** (Cf. Tripathi, 'History of Kannauj', p.322) but it would be too far-fetched to identify this Malladeva with his namesake of the Bheet-Bhaganpur inscription.

[36] JBRS, XXXV. 159; Cf. **Prabandha-cintamani** and the **Purusapariksa** of Vidyapati (PP), Ed. Grierson.

[37] Ppm, p.289, verse I, 180.

[38] Elliot and Dowson, 'History of India as Told by its Own Historians', II. 251.

[39] JASB (NS), X. 97-104.

[40] Ibid; XI. 161.

[41] JBRS; XXXV. 158.

[42] PP. Tale 38. Vide, also my article referred to above.

[43] Ibid. Tales 3, 4, 8, 11 and 22.

[44] ABORI, XXXV, 99 ff. On Harisimhadeva, see Upendra Thakur, 'History of Mithila', Chapter V; R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar', 117 ff.

[45] Ppm, p. 184, verse I. 108: वरमन्ति चण्डेश्वर कित्ति तुअ; p. 185, verse I. 108: वरमन्त्रिणः चण्डेश्वरस्य कीर्तिस्तव तथापेक्ष्य हरिब्रह्मणेह्वा भणति । हरिकवेश्चण्डेश्वर मन्त्रिणां प्रयुक्तिः; p. 186, 187; and also p. 107, verse 2. Cf. Also Haribansa Kochada, 'Apabhramsa Sahitya', Delhi, (V S) 2013, p. 321, 330-31. See also, Rahul Sankrityayana, 'Hindi Kavyadhara', p. 464.

[46] JASB (L), XVI. 269; J K Mishra's 'History of Maithili Literature' does not take note of this fact though its importance in the study of Maithili literature has been recognised by Subhadra Jha in his 'Formation of the Maithili Language', London, 1958.

[47] ABORI, Vol. XXXV, 1955; pp. 91-121. Also writer's article 'The Karnatas of Mithila'.

[48] Sir J N Sarkar, 'History of Bengal', (Ed.), p. 9.

[49] **Nasiri** (Translation), 578 N.

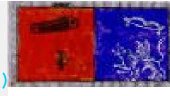
[50] Sarkar, op.cit., p. 13 fn.

[51] Ibid; 74-75.

[52] Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica, 1917-18; pp. 8-42.

[53] Sarkar, op. cit., p. 76.

[54] C H I, III. P. 261.



[55] Also read as 'Fi Khardini Ashilakh menal'. For plate, see ABORI, XXXVI. 163-66; Cf. Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. IV, No 1. Also, R K Choudhary, 'Select Inscriptions of Bihar'.

[56] Cf. My article, 'Vidyapati's Purusapariksa – An Important Source of History' published as an appendix in my 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut', Benares, 1972, in which the sources have been critically discussed. Also, R K Choudhary, 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati', Benares, 1976, and 'Mithilak Sanskritik Itihas', Darbhanga, 1961-62, for inscriptions.

CHAPTER II: EARLY HISTORY OF VIDEHA

[1] U Thakur, 'History of Mithila', p. 34.

[2] S N Pradhan, 'Chronology of Ancient India', pp. 18, 30.

[3] Thakur, op. cit., pp. 38, 39.

[4] **Satpatha Brahmana**, XII. 8. 5. (SBE – XLIV, p. 423.)

[5] 'History of Bengal', (Ed.) R C Mazumdar, I, p. 290.

[6] Pargiter, 'Ancient Indian Historical Tradition', p. 95.

[7] Some scholars identify him with **Nami Sapya** of the **Rigveda** (X.48.9) and the **Panchavimsa Brahmana** (XXV.10.17) wherein it is stated that Nami Sapya, the killer of the Dasa chief, **Namuchi**, was the king of Videha. Pradhan and Thakur hold identical views on the issue.

[8] 'Political History of Ancient India' (6th edition), p. 55.

[9] 'India in the Vedic Age', p. 76.

[10] **Sat.Brah.** III. 3.4.18; **Jaiminiya Br.** II. 79.

[11] Ibid, XIII; 5.4.22.

[12] A S, I.6.

[13] Buddhacharita, IV. 80.

[14] Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Early History of Mithila', JBRS, XXXVIII, Pt. II.

[15] Ibid; the description is also attested to by the **Mithilamahatmya-khanda** of the **Brhadvisnupurana**.

[16] **Mahagovindasutta – Digha**; II, pp. 230 ff; **DPPN** – II, p. 880.

[17] **Sumangalavilasini**; II, p. 482.

[18] A L Basham, 'Ajivikas', pp. 4-5.

[19] **Yajnavalkyasmriti**; 1, 2.

[20] Cf. Mayrhofer, 'Etymological Sanskrit Dictionary', 'Deha'.

[21] Monier Williams, 'Sanskrit English Dictionary', VI; it occurs in this sense in **Rigveda**.

[22] Cf. **Visnupurana**, IV.5.8ff; **Ramayan**, I.71.4ff; **Raghuvamsa**, XI.32ff.

[23] **Civaravastu**, 5ff.

[24] **Jataka**, VI. p. 43.

[25] **Arthasastra**, p. 378.

[26] 'State and Government in Ancient India', p. 132.

[27] **Jataka**, VI, p. 211. King and three **mahamattas**, Vijaya, Sunama and Alata.

[28] **Bhavisyat Purana**, XI.8.22-24; **Purana Index**, II, p. 325.

[29] **Kalpasutra**, i, p. 123; **Nirayavalika**, pp. 19ff.

[30] Fleet, CII, III, pp.8ff.

CHAPTER III: AJATASATRU AND THE LICHCHAVIS OF VAISALI

[1] TM, 152.

[2] **Uvasago-Dasao**, II. Appendix, p. 7; Cf. Tawney's **Kathakosa**, p. 176ff.

[3] Cf. B C L aw, 'Buddhistic Studies', p. 199; DPPN, II, 781; **Vinayapitaka**, I. 228; **Udana**, VIII. 6; **Divyavadana**, II. 522; **Anguttaranikaya**, II. 25.

[4] **Sumangala-Vilasini**, II. 516; Cf. Rahul Sankrityayana, 'Buddha-carya'.

[5] Cf. TM, 152.

[6] A L Basham, 'The Wonder That Was India', London, 1954; p. 47.

[7] B C Law, 'Tribes in Ancient India', p. 329.

[8] Cf. SBE, XI, pp. 1-5; XVII, 101. Rahul Sankrityayana has suggested that Bimbisara had annexed Anga to the Magadha empire and had thereby conquered and annexed territories lying to the east of Lichchavi's republic, viz., Anguttarapa lying between Kamala and Kosi in Tirhut. The Lichchavi authority was limited to a very small area over which Ajatasatru wanted to dominate. The fragrant substance which the Lichchavis used to usurp used to come from Nepal. The Magadhan and the Lichchavis were at bay at the place where Kamala descends on the plain. It is evident from the Buddhist literature that Nepal had trade relations with Anguttarapa, Vaisali, Kapilavastu and Sravasti and the point is supported by the **Mulasarvastivadavinaya** from which it is evident that Nepal was noted for its woollen goods and fragrant substance, Kasturi.

[9] Cf. AS, XI.

[10] JBBRAS, XXVII. 188.

[11] R K Choudhary; 'Siddhartha' (Hindi).

[12] A L Basham; 'History and Doctrine of the Ajivikas', p. 72.

[13] **Digha-Nikaya**, II. 72. Cff **Mahaparinibbanasutta**, Banaras, 1941. P. 28 – तेन खो पन समयेन सुनिध बस्सकारा मगध महामती पाटलिग्रामे नगरे भाषोन्ति वज्जीन पटिवाहाय. Also, cf. P. 29.

[14] Ibid; pp. 30-31.

[15] Ibid; p. 8: वज्जीने रञ्ञा मागधेन अजातसतुना वैदेहिपुतेन यदिदं बुद्धस्स अञ्ञत्र उपलापनाथ अञ्ञत्र मिथुभेदाय ।

[16] Cf. R K Mookerji, 'Hindu Civilisation', pp. 189-90.

[17] Sumangala-Vilasini, II. 522.

[18] DPPN, II. 846; Cf. JRAS, 1931.

[19] R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar', Patna, 1958, p. 29.

[20] Edited by A S Gopani and V J Choksi, Ahmedabad, 1935.

[21] PHAI, 6. 213.

[22] DPPN, I. 34.

[23] PIHC, XIV. 40.

[24] IC, II. 810. There is no plausible evidence to support this point of view. The whole statement stands contradicted by the Buddhist tradition; Cf. TM, 155. He has accepted Raichoudhury's view-points without any discussion.

[25] PIHC, XIV. 40.

[26] Nirayavalikasutta, p. 19ff.

[27] Cf. Ibid; Also, cf. 'Dialogues of Buddha', II. 78-80; and the **MPNS**.

[28] **Bhagavatisutta**, 3 Vols., Bombay, 1918-21, Sutra 299 ff.

[29] **Avasyakasutra**, Ratlam, 1928-29, 2 Vols., Vol II. 172 ff.

[30] The story is further explained in **Abhidhana Rajendra**, Vol III, S V Kulavalaya.

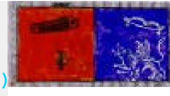
[31] AMMK (Ganapati Shastri's edition), Vol I, p. 603.

[32] R R Diwakar, 'Bihar Through the Ages', p. 104.

[33] TM, 166.

[34] D R Regmi, 'Ancient Nepal', Calcutta, 1960, p. 30. I am of the opinion that though the confederacy suffered defeat, the people of Mithila escaped total disaster and succeeded in maintaining their identity. The Nandas had to proceed against the Maithilas and the latter were exterminated by the former. It is only after this event that the whole of North Bihar came under Magadha.

[35] G D College Bulletin Series No 4 (Edited by me).



[36] PHAI, 219; ABORI, 1920-21, p. 3; SBE, XI, p. xvi.

[37] JBRS, XXXVII, 177 ff; XXXVIII, Part 2, cf. my article 'Early History of Mithila'.

CHAPTER IV: MITHILA BETWEEN 185 BC – 320 AD

[1] HCT, 193; Cf. JBORS – III, 287.

[2] HP, 153-55.

[3] JBORS – XX, 301; Cf. CHN, p. 104

[4] ARASI, 1915-16; Cf. TM, 174, and one from Jayamanglagarh and other from Naulagarh; Cf. G D College Bulletin Series, Nos 4 and 1 respectively. The Sunga antiquities have also been found at the recent excavations at Katra (Muzaffarpur).

[5] MY, 29; JBRS – XLI, pp.132-39.

[6] ASS – XII, 13.5; Cf. PHAI (6), pp. 369-70.

[7] **Mahabhasya** – III.2.123.

[8] IC – II, 191.

[9] DKA, 35.

[10] IC – VI, 412.

[11] Kern; **Brhatsamhita**, Introduction, p. 37; EI – XX, 79-80, LS.

[12] EI – XX, 79-80, LS.

[13] Mahabhasya – III.2.2.

[14] S Chattopadhyaya, EHNI, p. 13.

[15] W W Tarn; 'The Greeks in Bactria and India', pp.132-33.

[16] R R Diwakar; 'Bihar Through the Ages', p. 202. The writer of these lines was also one of the excavators at Kumhrar in 1951 and 1952; Cf. CB.

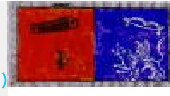
[17] EHNI, p. 37.

[18] JBORS – XIV, 408.

[19] PHAI (6), 380. It seems that Pusyamitra succeeded in stemming the tide of the Greek invasion. There could not have been any influence on the terracotta art at Vaisali without the actual association with the Greeks.

[20] JASB (Letters) – XIX, p. 29.

[21] IHQ – XIV, 481 ff.



[22] TM, 177.

[23] PHAI (6), 101.

[24] IA – IX, 178; Fleet, 'Gupta Inscriptions', Introduction, 184-5.

[25] Fleet, op.cit., 135, 191; IA – XIV, 350.

[26] JHI, pp.112-13.

[27] EI – XIV, 142; IA, 1903, p. 382; CII – II, P. LXXII-LXXV; PHAI (6), p. 473 ff.

[28] PHAI (6), p. 473 fn-7.

[29] JBORS – VI, p. 22.

[30] IA – VIII, 475; CII – II, p. LXXIX; Cf. H W Bailey's article in the JRAS of 1942; Cf. JASB, 1943, pp. 179-183.

[31] JBORS – VI, 30.

[32] AIG, p. 2; ARASI – XVI, 8-11; JRAS, 1913, pp. 627-650; 1914, pp. 79-88; 369-382; 403-410; 748-751; 1915, pp. 95-108.

[33] J C Mathur & Yogendra Misra, 'Homage to Vaisali', p. 146.

[34] Vassilief's Taranatha/Tr. M LaComme, p. 210.

[35] IA – XXXII, 385.

[36] JRAS, 1908; p. 677.

[37] CHN; pp. VI, VII.

[38] HCIP – II, 142.

[39] D R Regmi; 'Ancient and Medieval Nepal', p. 49 (Volume I).

[40] Allan; 'Coins of Ancient India', Introduction, XLVIII ff.

[41] JNSI – XII, 122.

[42] R Sankrityayana; 'Puratattvanibandhavali', pp. 16-17.

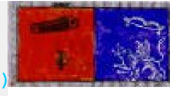
[43] Sino-Indian Studies – II, pp. 136-156.

[44] TM, 180.

[45] AIG – 2; EI – VII, 176-179.

[46] Pargiter; 'Purana Text', p. 52, note 45.

[47] JHI, 41-42.



[48] JBORS, 1920, p. 150; Cf. IA, 1918, p. 298.

[49] DKA, 52.

[50] JRAS, 1908, p. 677; V A Smith; 'Catalogue of Coins', p.. 179; Rapson; 'Indian Coins', pp. 10, 32.

[51] TM, 176.

[52] D R Mankad; 'Puranic Chronology'.

[53] Ptolemy (Edited by Surendra Mazumdar-Sastri), 97, 102.

[54] Ibid, 212-213; Cf. MBH – VII, 484-7; Cf. Reinaud, 'Memoirs **Sur l' indies**', p. 353.

[55] Ibid, 214-216.

[56] Ancient Geography of India, p. 717.

[57] Ptolemy, 217.

[58] Ibid, 227.

[59] Ibid, 212.

[60] **Abhidanachintamani** – IV, 26.

[61] Ptolemy, 216; B C Law, 'Indological Studies', Part I, p. 38; 'Tribes in Ancient India', pp. 93-94. Important cities mentioned y Ptolemy are: Boraits, Koryagaza, Kondots, Aganora etc.

[62] DKA, 72.

[63] Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain & Ireland, Volumes X, XI.

[64] HAIB, 31.

[65] Deuse Peuples Maconnus in Melanges Charles des Harlez, 176-185.

[66] La Georaphia de La Ptolomes – L' inde, VII, 1-4.

[67] Malaviya Commemoration Volume; Cf. **Prabhakaracharita**; and **Avasyakabriadvritti** of Haribhadra.

[68] IA, 1918, p. 298; DKA, p. 52, fn. 28, 29, p. 73, fn 12.

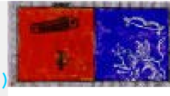
[69] DKA, p. 52, fn 48.

[70] M L B Jhaveri; 'Nirvanakalika-Padaliptacharya', Introduction, 10; Cf. Padaliptaprabandha, vv, 44, 59, 61.

[71] Journal of the Greater India Society, 1943.

[72] HOS – XXVI, p. 251; XXVII, p. 223.

[73] RAM – IV, 43.12; MBH – II, 32.17.



[74] **Harivamsa**, XIV.16.

[75] JIH – XII.17-18; CII – II(i), pp. XXVI-XXVII; Cf. P C Bagchi's presidential speech in Section I of PIHC-VI. The story of Kalaka is told in many versions. Gardhabhila is said to have insulted Kalkachara by the abduction of his sister who had joined the order with him. The monk then approached one of the Scythian kings of Sakastan. Kalaka had magic power. He persuaded Saka to march against Ujjain. Gardhabhila was made captive and Kalaka's sister was released in 61 BC.

[76] JHI, p. 36.

[77] Sabhaparva, XXIX, 1081-2; Drona – VII, 183; **Vayupurana** – XLV, 122; **Mark.P** – LVII, 430.

[78] Ptolemy, p. 390.

[79] ARASI, 1911-12, pp. 18-19; 1913-14, pp. 98 ff.

[80] Ibid, 1903-4.

[81] JBORS – XIV, 398-99.

[82] IC – III, 727; for other details, see R K Choudhary, 'The Saka-Murundas' in the L S College Diamond Jubilee Volume (Muzaffarpur) edited by Dr Hariranjan Ghoshal.

[83] Crooke, 'Native Races of India'.

[84] Mcrindle, 'Ancient India', p. 139 fn.

[85] Ibid, 137-38.

[86] JHI, p. 219.

[87] EHI (4), p. 429.

[88] I collected this information myself from some Bhar youth of Raibhir and Singheswarasthan at Madhipura and examined the ruined sites over there now destroyed by Kosi. Broken pieces of bricks and other stray antiquities were shown to me some ten years ago.

[89] Cf. My article, 'History of Begusarai' in the R C Commemoration Volume (Begusarai).

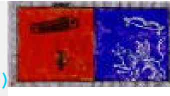
[90] Cf. 'Notes on the Vajji Countries and the Mallas of Pava' in the **JBORS** – VI, p. 261. S N Singh, 'History of Tirhut', p. 20 fn. Rahul Sankrityayana, 'Buddhacharya'. In those days, Vaisali was one of the six great cities of India.

[91] Jataka, Nos 149, 301 etc.; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar'.

[92] Sumangalavilasini – II, p. 519.

[93] HCIP – III, 82.

[94] Somadeva, '**Kathasaritasagar**', V, 3, XII, 22; Ksemendra, '**Brhatakathamanjari**', IX.V. 728; Bharata, '**Natyasastra**', XIII.32.



[95] 'Homage to Vaisali', pp.72-73. Important Lichchavi kings of Nepal were Jayadeva, Rshabhadeva, Samkardeva, Dharmadeva, Manadeva, etc.

[96] IA – IX, 178 ff; Bhagwan Lal refers to the year of Nepal Inscription to Vikrama era, Fleet to the Gupta era and Levi to the unspecified era.

[97] IA – XIII, 424.

[98] Ibid, XIV, 350; Fleet, G I – Introduction, 135, 191.

[99] List No 541.

[100] Regmi, 'Nepal', p.9.

[101] Regmi, op.cit., p. 48.

[102] JBORS – XXVII, 225 ff.

[103] CHN, pp. 102-3.

[104] JRAS, 1889, p. 55; 1893, p. 81; PHAI (6th edn.), p. 580. For other details, see my article in the 'Comprehensive History of Bihar', Vol I, Part I (published by the K P Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna).

CHAPTER V: EMERGENCE OF TIRABHUKTI AS THE CAPITAL OF NORTH BIHAR (C. AD 320-1097)

[1] ARASI, 1903-4, pp. 107-20.

[2] EI – XV, p. 138, No 5.

[3] ARASI, 1903-4, pp. 107, 8, 12; Cf. R D Banerji. AIG, pp. 74-75 and 109 – '**Tira-Kumaramatyadhikaranasya**', the word bhukti is not mentioned.

[4] 'Comprehensive History of Bihar', Vol I, Part II, pp. 114 ff.

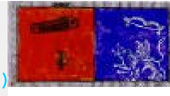
[5] **Yuvarajabhattarakapadiya baladhikaranasya**.

[6] **Dasa, Datta, Nandin, Pala, Sen, Simha** etc. show that all kinds of people were admitted into the guild. Cf. **Narada** – X.1.

[7] G D College Bulletin Series No 1; JBRS – XXXVII, pp. 4.

[8] CII – III, No 46, Line 11.

[9] R K Choudhary, 'Select Inscriptions of Bihar'. Here it may be pointed out that only very recently it has been suggested that during the period under review (but after AD 550) Svetapur was the capital of Tirabhukti. The contention is fallacious and without any foundation and I have shown elsewhere that **Amaravati** was the capital of Tirabhukti and not Svetapur (Cf. my paper, '**China, Tibet, Nepal and the Capital of Tirabhukti**' in PIHC, 1978, Hyderabad). After the decline of Vaisali, the people of Tirabhukti shifted their capital to a safer region near Balirajgarh complex and ultimately Amaravati developed into a full-fledged capital.



[10] For Naulagarh, see R K Choudhary (edited) G D College Bulletin Series Nos 1 to 4; R K Choudhary (edited) 'Begusarai Abhinandanagrantha', 1973; PIHC, 1964; JBRS, 1952 (for D C Sircar's article); D R Patil, 'Antiquarian Remains of Biha'; P C Roychaudhury (edited) 'Monghyr District Gazetteer'. In editing the seal, I have received help from Professor K D Bajpai and Dr T H D Sinha, who did his D Litt under my supervision.

[11] Sircar, 'Select Inscriptions', 1942, pp. 350, 357.

[12] R K Choudhary, 'Select Inscriptions of Bihar' (Bhagalpur Copper Plate of Narayanapala).

[13] Katra Inscription.

[14] R K Choudhary, op. cit. (Bangaon Copper Plate of Vigrahapala).

[15] Sircar, 'Indian Epigraphical Glossary', p. 6; Cf. EI – XXXI.

[16] Ibid, p. 377.

[17] Ibid; Cf. EI – XXIII, p. 3.

[18] For details, see my article in PIHC, 1964 (Ranchi).

[19] R K Choudhary, G D College Bulletin Series, Nos 1 to 4; JBRS – XXXVII, Parts III-IV, pp. 1-4.

[20] Altekar, 'Catalogue of the (Gupta) Indian Coins – Plate II'.

[21] J N Banerji, 'The Development of Hindu Iconography', 1956, p. 448; Cf. EI – XXI, p. 8; JBBRAS – VII, (1862); Cf. JNSI – VI, 19 for Vaisali Coins with trident.

CHAPTER VI: POLITICAL HISTORY OF MITHILA FROM THE FALL OF THE GUPTAS TO THE RISE OF THE KARNATAS (550-1097)

[1] EI – XVII, 193; XXVI, 233 ff.

[2] CII – III, No 42, p.205; JIH – XXXII, 130.

[3] JBORS – XIV, pp. 254-265.

[4] R N Dandekar, 'A History of the Guptas', p. 171.

[5] JIH – XXXII, 131.

[6] GOS – VI, 18.

[7] TM, 195. The statement is based on Raichoudhary's PHAI (6), p. 63, but there is no positive evidence even in the latter authority to suggest a direct Maukhari domination in Tirhut. A sober analysis of all the available data suggests otherwise.

[8] R K Mukherji, 'Harsha', pp. 54-55; Cf. CR of February 1928, p. 207.

[9] CII – III, No 42, pp. 205 ff; CIB.

[10] R G Basak; 'History of North-Eastern India', pp. 120, 185.

[11] CII – III, No 52, pp. 232 ff; Cf. CIB.

[12] 'Early History of Kamrup', pp. 50-51; EI – XII, p. 65 ff; XIX, p. 115 ff.

[13] EI – XII, 76 ff; XIX, 116 ff, 245 ff.

[14] IHQ – VI, 60 ff; 'A Volume of Eastern and Indian Studies', p. 85 ff; JASB (Letters) – I, p. 418 ff.

[15] EI – XIX, 11 ff; JASB (Letters) – III, 45 ff; IC, 1934, p. 137 ff; IA – LXI, 44ff.

[16] IHQ – VII, 243 ff; IC – II, 153 ff, 167 ff, 171 ff; Ibid, I, 421 ff.

[17] JRAS, 1896, pp. 90 ff; Cf. 'Statistical Account of Bengal', Vol I, pp. 360-70.

[18] JASB (Letters), 1936, pp. 419-427.

[19] The **Markandeya Purana** (XLV.96), **Vayu-P** (LVII.16) and the **Mahabharata** (**Vanaparva** – 222, Verse 14231) refer to the Kausiki. In the **MBH**, the name is preceded by the expression **Trisothra**. The Saptakausiki of the Sanskrit works include the main river and its tributaries from the north, viz., Tamra, Arun, Dudha, Likhu, Tambs(?), Bhotia (JASB, 1895, pp. 1-34, Part I). Many channels of the Kosi were known to Hamilton as Burhi or Mara Kosi. Barua holds that the scene of the Nidhanpur grant was in the Purnea district in an old channel of the Kosi which was noticed by Rennell (op.cit., p. 5).

[20] HAIB, 152.

[21] **Brhat-Samhita** – XIV.5; IA, 1893, p. 176.

[22] CII – III, p. 205 ff, CIB.

[23] JBORS – XIV, 265.

[24] IA – XIX, 7 ff.

[25] EI – XXI, 73 ff; XXIV, 283 ff.

[26] EI – VIII, 60 ff.

[27] HAIB, pp. 243-266. Sen's argument in this respect does not seem to be convincing as it is influenced more by local patriotism than by historical reason.

[28] 'Early History of Kamrup', pp. 65-66.

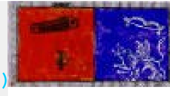
[29] IHI, p. 50.

[30] DKM, 257; Cf. EHI (3), 339.

[31] DKM, 220.

[32] CII – III, No 73, p.283 ff; Cf. MB, 56.

[33] DKM, 223; Sinha has based his account on the **AMMK** (IHI, p. 65, see 51).



[34] JASB (NS) – IV, No 5, p. 275.

[35] JKAS – II, 3-4; Cf. IC – I, 421-31.

[36] Beal; 'Life of Hiuen-tsang', p. 172.

[37] IHQ – XV, 122.

[38] JIH – XXXII, 131. In those days the north-western boundary of Kamrup was Purnea and Kamrup king could conquer without going to Pundravardhana. The boundaries of Mithila and Kamrup were co-terminus of the Kosi (Ibid, 130).

[39] MB, 92; IA – IX, 18-20.

[40] DKM, 278.

[41] IC – I, Pt I, Book Review.

[42] IC – I, 427-28.

[43] Risley; 'People of India', 162; N N Vasu, 'Viswakosa', XV, 405; IH – VII, 743 ff; EI – XII, 65-79; IX, 115-125; Watters – II, 186. The traditional accounts maintain that a king of Tripura Adi-Dharmapal brought five Vaidika Brahmanas from Mithila to assist him in the performance of a sacrifice and this system of inviting Brahmanas from outside was in vogue since 550 AD. Kamrup was the centre of Deva worship. The grantees carried with them the plates to Assam when they shifted later. These lands lay in Mithila and not elsewhere as by no stretch of imagination can be take Kosi to Assam. Rennell has shown an old course of the Kosi joining the Ganges near Rajmahal or about fifty mile below its present confluence. Kosi joins the Ganges today at Kursela.

[44] Havell; 'Aryan Rule in India', p. 191, note 1; Cf. D C Sen, 'History of Bengali Language and Literature', p. 385; EHI (4), 353; TK, 119; Beal – II, 256-7; Life, 83.

[45] Watters – II, 173; Beal – II, 187; Life, 127; Watters – II, 183-4.

[46] HC (Cal edn.), p. 211.

[47] Watters – II, 81; Beal – II, 78.

[48] Watters – II, 63; Beal – II, 66.

[49] Watters – II, 81; Beal – II, 66. While Vaisali was included in the dominion of Harsa, Nepal was outside his authority (Cf. TK, 99, 118).

[50] JASB (Letters) – XVI, 194.

[51] Chung-Tien-Chu-Hing-Ki or Account of Journeys to Mid-India.

[52] JA, 1900, p. 297 ff.

[53] Ibid, 306 ff. It was translated by Waddell in English. Cf. IACR, p. 37 ff.

[54] Asiatic Journal, 1836; JA, 1839, pp. 287-400; JASB – VI (1837), pp. 61-75; JA, 1847; IA – IX, pp.14-24; CHB – P.

[55] Extracts were translated by Chavannes in '**Documents sur les Tou-kiue oncidantaux**'.

[56] IA – IX, 20.

[57] Sino-Indian Studies – I, 68.

[58] IAOR, 1911, p. 37 ff, 53 ff.

[59] JRAS, 1880, p. 438 ff.

[60] JBORS – XXII, 161 ff.

[61] Le Nepal – II, 156-59; Cf. my article 'Jisnugupta of Nepal'.

[62] JASB (Letters) – XIX, p. 43.

[63] Ibid, p. 44.

[64] L Petech; 'A Study of the Chronicles of Ladakh', pp. 51-57.

[65] Le Nepal – II, 148 fn 1.

[66] EHI (4), 366-7.

[67] MB, 92.

[68] IHQ – III, 792.

[69] TM, 200.

[70] IA – IX, 20.

[71] DKM, 284-85.

[72] IHQ – XXX, 165; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'China, Tibet, Nepal and the Capital of Tirabhukti' in PIHC, 1978, Hyderabad.

[73] Nepal – II, 174-75; JBORS – XXII, 161 ff; JRAS, 1880, pp. 528, 546, 556; IA, 1916, 39; IHQ – XV, Supplement, 59-62; Antiquities of Tibet – II, 82.

[74] DKM, 316.

[75] Cf. R R Diwakar, 'Bihar Through the Ages'; R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar'.

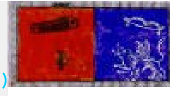
[76] JIH – XXXII, 131.

[77] IA – X, 110; PHAI (6), 611.

[78] R R Diwakar, 'Bihar Through the Ages', p. 269; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar'.

[79] The Copper Plate has since been published.

[80] IC – XV, p. 212 ff.



[81] EI – XX, 37-46; XII, 40; ASR, 1925-26, pp. 131, 138; TK, 250-256.

[82] DKM, 316.

[83] DHNI – I, 278; Cf. **Rajatarangini** – IV, 421-468.

[84] EI – IX, 41-47.

[85] DHNI – I, 275-277.

[86] DKM, 320.

[87] Ibid, 321.

[88] TM, 203.

[89] IA – IX, 178 ff.

[90] K L Barua; 'Early History of Kamrup', pp. 111-119.

[91] N Vasu; 'Social History of Kamrup', pp. 30-32; HAIB, 288; HNEI, 227-38.

[92] Cf. **Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien-ubersetzt**; MB, 183; IHQ – VII, 37 ff.

[93] JBORS – XXVII, 226.

[94] HAIB, 376.

[95] JBORS – XXVII, 227.

[96] IHQ – XVI, 219.

[97] Whether these rulers had any connection with the Chandra dynasty of Arakan or not, we cannot say. In an inscription on a pillar in Burma, there is an account of 19 Chandra kings who ruled between 600 and 1000. Vaisali was held in respect by the Burmese and we find an account of a matrimonial alliance. The capital Wethali was named after Vaisali. Cf. Phayre, 'History of Burma', p. 45; for other details, Cf. IHQ – VII, 37-40; IA – IV, 365 ff; MB, 187; JASB.

[98] JBORS – XXVII, 226.

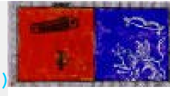
[99] Taranatha says, "There was no longer any member of it (the Chandras) in Orissa and other five provinces to the east. Each Kshatriya, Brahmana and merchant constituted himself but there was no king ruling the country."

[100] DKM, 325; Vapyata is said to be a king of Purnea. Cf. IA – IV, 365-66; Cf. EI – IX, 41 ff.

[101] EI – I, 122; ST, 54; JIH – XXXII, 132; ASR – II, 451.

[102] EI – XVII, 304; 4 (a), PB, 48.

[103] GOS, pp. 4-6; ABORI – XIII, 197 ff. The expression **Panchagauda** has been used in a very wide sense by Kalhana (RT – IV, 468) and was taken to mean Gauda proper, Saraswata (East Punjab), Kanyakubja (Gangetic Doab), Mithila and Utkala. We learn from the **Ballalacharita** and the **Riyaz-us-salatin** that before the Muhammadan conquest,



Bengal is said to have been divided into five districts. Gauda signified the Bengal empire (Cf. IHQ – XXVIII, pp. 123-24).

[104] JRAS, 1906, p. 442.

[105] IA – IX, 366.

[106] EI – IV, 251 ff.

[107] IC – IV, 266.

[108] JIH – XXXII, 134.

[109] EI – IX, 96-98, verse 24.

[110] G D College Bulletin No 1.

[111] TM, 207-8.

[112] IC – IV, 266.

[113] Le Nepal – II, 77-78.

[114] Ibid, 83; Cf. IA, 1892, p. 257 fn-6.

[115] EI – II, 160.

[116] IA – XXI, 253 ff.

[117] EI – II, 160 ff.

[118] IA – XV, 305; EI – XVIII, 109, 113 fn-4; DHNI – I, 296 ff.

[119] TM, 309.

[120] DKM, 379.

[121] IA – XV, 304 ff; CHB – The place names of the Inscription are yet unidentified, though some scholars identify it with the region of Kausikikachcha.

[122] IHQ – XXVIII, 2.52 ff. D C Sircar does not accept the view.

[123] EI – VI, 103; IA – XII, 218.

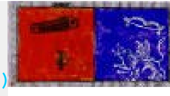
[124] EI – V, 193.

[125] EI – I, 56.

[126] EI – XXIII, pp. 199-214; IHQ – XVI, 181; CP, 52.

[127] JBORS – XIV, 508.

[128] IA – XV, 105 ff; CIB.



[129] TM, 211; The last known date of Mahendrapala is 907-8, Cf. JASB – XXXII, 321 ff.

[130] Ibid, 211; DHNI – I, 303; IA – XV, 112; JBBRAS – XXI, 410; JRAS, 1904, 642 ff, Bhandarkar No; PB, 59.

[131] PB, 59.

[132] EI – XVIII, 199-218; PIHC – XIV, 111 ff.

[133] DHNI – I, 305; Allan, 'Cambridge Shorter History', p. 144.

[134] HCIP – IV, 84.

[135] **Bharatavarsa** (1344), p. 284.

[136] Papers published in Vol I of the All India Maithili Writers' Conference, 1956 (Darbhanga).

[137] EI – I, p. 126 ff; Cf. IHQ – XXV, 213.

[138] Cf. EI – I, 265; EI – IV, 284.

[139] EI, 145.

[140] DHNI – II, 676.

[141] JIH – XXXII, 135.

[142] **Arthasastra** (Shamsastry), 290.

[143] Somadeva's **Yasastilaka**, a work of the tenth century AD, gives an account of the composition of the old Indian armies. There is a reference to the Tirhut regiment, found solely of war and devoted to manoeuvres incidental to naval combats, darkening the entire horizon with its mighty elephants. ....This Tirhut regiment was expert in naval warfare. For details, Cf. K K Handiqui, 'Yasastilaka and Indian Culture', pp. 60, 61, 248.

[144] IHQ – XVI, 179.

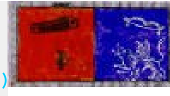
[145] IA – XIV, 165.

[146] Bhandarkar's List No 1628; IHQ – XXX,382; PIHC – X, 245 ff; IKM, 408, 412; DHNI – I, 316.

[147] JASB (Letters) – XVI, 248; IHQ – XXX, 382 ff; PIHC – X, 245-49. Down to the close of the 12th century AD, same script was prevalent in Bengal, Bihar and Nepal with local modifications. Levi, relying on this evidence, suggested a nominal suzerainty of the Palas over the region of Nepal. Mazumdar's contention in the present state of our knowledge does not admit of verification. There is no doubt that there were intimate cultural contacts between Nepal and Mithila and the discovery of Maithili **MSS** in Nepal may be explained by the migration of scholars from this part of that country.

[148] For details, see my paper, 'The Karnatas of Mithila' in the ABORI – XXXV, pp. 90-121.

[149] ABORI, Silver Jubilee Volume, pp. 300-301. I discussed the question of Rastrakuta domination with Dr A S Altekar. He told me that there was nothing to prove the existence of Rastrakuta rule in Tirhut. We do not find any mention of or reference to Tirhut in the Rastrakuta records. Even casual reference to Tirhut regiment in the



Yasastilaka during the time of the Rastrakutas does not give an inkling of their sway in this part. Mirashi has simply deduced inference.

[150] IHQ – VII, 679-689; MB, 170; Cf. JGRI, 1957, '**Gangeyadeva of Tirabhukti**'; JIH – XXXII.

[151] EI – II, p. 11, verse 14.

[152] DHNI – II, 788.

[153] R D Banerji, 'Banglar Itihas' (1st edition), Vol I, p. 252.

[154] Ibid, p. 239-40.

[155] EI – XI, 143-46.

[156] EI – XXVIII, 143 ff.

[157] Ibid; Cf. Bhandarkar's List No 1126. **Adbhutasagara** and **Danasagara** are dated in the Saka era. The **Saduktikarnamrta** of Sridharadasa is also dated in the same era. The Saka era of the Valgudar Inscription is one of the earliest epigraphic documents in the Saka era, so far found in eastern India. The inscription mentions Krimila visaya, also found in the Naulagarh inscription. The Brahmana brothers responsible for the Valgudar epigraph were not the original inhabitants of the city of Krimila and possibly came from Tirhut and brought the Saka era with them.

[158] JIH – XXXII, 137.

[159] ABORI – XXXV, 102 ff.

[160] MASB – V, 75.

[161] JBORS – IX, 300.

[162] IC – VII, p. 3 ff.

[163] IC – VII, 3 ff. A Ghosh believes that Gangetadeva who held Benares, invaded Gauda, Anga and occupied Tirhut for sometime.

[164] ASR – XII, 113; About Mahipala's authority he is not very clear and he says 'We are not sure whether North Bihar was inherited or conquered by Mahipala'. Cf. MB, 140.

[165] JIH – XXXIV, 323.

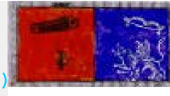
[166] Petech, 192-93; ABORI – XXXV, 102-6.

[167] Petech, 192-93; for details, ABORI – XXXV, 102-6.

[168] DHNI – II, 773, 778, 784; Ibid, I, 325; Bhandarkar's List No 1223, 1225. The Bheraghat Inscription refers to Karna's conflict with Vanga while the Paikore Pillar Inscription refers to his extent up to Birbhum.

[169] JASB, 1900, pp. 191-193; HAIB, 401; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'The University of Vikramasila', Patna, 1976.

[170] JOI – VII, 265 ff.



[171] TM, 221; JBORS – X, 39 fn 3.

[172] EI – XII, 206; DHNI – II, 787-8. D Banerji, 'Banglar Itihas', p.284. We learn from the **Prakritapainglama** (BI, 1902; p. 294-6) that Kalachuri Karna devastated Champaranya. Cf. **Bheraghat Inscription** text: '**Champaranya vidaranodesttayasah subhrams UNA**'.

[173] EI – XIX, p. 23; Ibid – VII, 88 ff.

[174] JBORS – IX, 300 ff. Another writer suggested, 'it is not exactly known what influence the Palas exercised over Tirhut in the 11th century AD.' Cf. ST, 56.

[175] IA – XIV, 167.

[176] R K Choudhary, G D College Bulletin No 1; Cf. JBRS – XXXVII, pp.1-4. A silver coin of Vigrahapala III was discovered from Naulagarh in 1950 and it was shown to Dr A S Altekar by me. Unfortunately the coin is since lost and its print is now available in the G D College Bulletin No 1.

[177] EI – XXIX, pp. 52 ff; CIB; Dr D C Sircar has hazarded a doubt as to why 'Raja' has been preferred to the expected Pala? His conjecture is that Prahasitaraja was born of a concubine. On the authority of a Tibetan account of Bengal, Dr S C Sarkar has pointed out, "Tibetan tradition records two main branches of the Palas, one ending with Gopala's son (and probably grandson who never ruled separately) and the other beginning with the grandson of Pa:sa:ha:na: (Prahasana) who may have been a brother of Gopala or his other son." Cf. JBORS – XXVII, 248. Is he Prahasitaraja of the Bangaon **CP**? Though there is no positive evidence, one is inclined to suggest the above contention.

[178] Ramapala attempted a partial rejuvenation of the empire, it is said.

[179] Ibid, 47; also 29.

[180] TM, 222.

[181] JBBRAS – XI. 268; IHQ – VII, 683.

[182] IA – XIV, 103.

[183] JBORS – IX, 307-8; X, 40-41.

[184] EI – VII, 98-99; CIB.

[185] HCIP – V, 53.

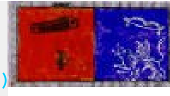
CHAPTER VII: THE KARNATAS OF MITHILA (1097-1325)

[1] **Pravachanasaroddhara**, 446; Cf. **Vividhakalpatirtha** (Sindhigranthamala), p. 32.

[2] **Nirayavaliyao** (edited by Gopani and Chokksi), p. 26. Cf. **Trisasthisalakapurusacharitam**, Parva 10, Sarga 6.

[3] IB, 110, 113; IHQ – XII, 611; Cf. H C Raichoudhary, 'Studies in Indian Antiquities', p. 157 fn-6; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar', s v Pala Inscription.

[4] JASB (NS) – V (1909), 471; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar', p. 101 ff.



[5] EI – XIV, 159.

[6] Buhler's Introduction to **Vikramankadevacharita**; Cf. IHQ – VII, 683.

[7] JBBRAS – XI, 268; IHQ – VII, 683; Epigraphia Carnatica – IX.

[8] IA – XIV, 103.

[9] IHQ – VII, 684.

[10] IA – XIX, 329 ff.

[11] EI – XXII, 138 ff.

[12] RC – III, 24.

[13] Ep, Carnatica – XI, Inscriptions of Devanagers Taluq No. 2, 3; Cf. MB, 164.

[14] PAIOC – III, 398.

[15] EI – XI, 230-31.

[16] PAIOC – III, 396.

[17] SII – III, Part III, pp. 424-5; JIH – II, 320 ff; Cf. K A N Sastri, 'The Cholas', 247 ff. Also, Cf. MB, 138-9, 209.

[18] JAHRS – I, 57.

[19] Ibid, 56-57.

[20] R D Banerji, 'Banglar Itihas' – I, 223; Cf. ST, 60, fn-1; JASB, 1893, Part I.

[21] **Gaudarajamala**, p. XI; for different views Cf. HAIB, 396-397.

[22] IA, 1910, P. 290; 1919, P. 144 ff.

[23] PIHC – XIV, 130.

[24] PB, 99.

[25] JBORS – IX, 306.

[26] IHQ – VII, 681; DHNI – I, 316, fn-3, 4.

[27] IHQ – XII, 475-76.

[28] EI – II, 185.

[29] HAIB, 456.

[30] JBORS – IX, 307.

[31] Vikramankadevacharita – III, 74.

[32] EI – IV, 262.

[33] IA, 1919, P. 114; Bombay Gazetteer, Vol I, Part II, p. 219.

[34] TM, 231; Cf. HAIB, 456; also, Gaudarajamala, 47.

[35] IHQ – XXIII, 326; Cf. K L Barua, 'Early History of Kamrupa'.

[36] JBORS – IX, 306.

[37] IHQ – VII, 681; XXX, 206 ff.

[38] DHNI – I, 203.

[39] IA, 1880, p. 188.

[40] Levi, 'Le Nepal' – II, 221-22.

[41] HASB (L), p. 186.

[42] **Charitrakosa** (Marathi), s v Nanyadeva.

[43] EI – I, 305; JASB, 1909, 467 ff; EI – XV, 282; JASB, 1901, 471; MTV, 97; MD.

[44] Quarterly Journal of the Mythical Society – XLIV, p. 1 ff; Cf. IHQ – XXX, 206 ff.

[45] TM.

[46] HCIP – V, 47.

[47] JBORS – XXVIII, 131; Cf. B H Hodgson, 'An Account of a Visit to the Ruins of Simaraon, Once the Capital of Mithila Province' in the JASB – V, 121; Cf. PIHC – XIV, 130 ff.

[48] JASB (NS) – XI, 407.

[49] **Purusapariksa**, ed. by Chanda Jha (Darbhanga edition), p. 19; Cf. my article, 'The Karnatas of Mithila' in the ABORI – XXXV, 91 ff; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar' for the epigraph; my 'History of Bihar', 101 ff; TM, 234 ff.

[50] IHQ – III, 577; Cf. IA, 1922.

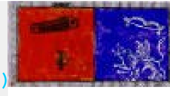
[51] Levi, op.cit., II, 194-197 (footnotes); Petech has given a slightly different reading of this verse.

[52] PP – I, 3.

[53] IHQ – VII, 688.

[54] MD, 61; Biharilal, '**Aini-Tirhut**', 10-11; Cf. **Katalog Der Deutschen Morgon-landischen Gessellschaft**, Leipzig, 1881, Vol II, p. 8. Here we find the mention of a **MSS** which was written in 1097 in the reign of Nanyadeva. Also Cf. IA – IX, 414 where Nanya is assigned a reign of 50 years.

[55] JBORS – IX, 305; Levi – II, 194.



[56] For traditional accounts, see MD. 61; BMI, 460-470; MTV, 97; TM, 236-238.

[57] JAHRS – I, 57.

[58] JBRS – IX, 305; TM, 235; PIHC – XIV, my article 'Nanyadeva and his Contemporary'; Chanda Jha, 'Purusapariksa', p. 19; Levi – II, 194, 198, 199. Both Kirpatrick and Bhagwanlal committed the error on account of the wrong reading of the first line of the Nepal **Vamsavali**.

[59] Levi – II, 197-199.

[60] JBORS – IX, 304-5; IA – IX, 188; IA – XIII, 418; EI – I, 313.

[61] JBORS – IX; Cf. R D Banerji, 'Banglar Itihas' (2nd edition), p. 318 fn-4; Professor Kielhorn, while editing the Deopara Inscription, placed Nanyadeva in Saka 1019.

[62] ABORI – XXXV, 93 (my article ' The Karnatas of Mithila').

[63] JAHRS – I, 55-56.

[64] JBORS – IX, 308; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar', p. 124.

[65] I am very much obliged to late Dr P K Gode, Curator, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, who copied the necessary extracts from the **Bharatabhasya** from the **MSS** in the BORI Library for my study. The **MSS** has been described in detail in the BORI Catalogue, Vol XIII, p. 377.

[66] ABORI – XXXV, 98; PIHC – XIV.

[67] RC, 'Commentary' – II, 5-6; II, 8.

[68] JBORS – IX, 301.

[69] EI – II, 2.

[70] JBORS – IX, 301.

[71] HCIP – V, 63; Cf. my article '**Prakritapainglama, An Important Source of the History of Mithila**' (included in the sources).

[72] BMI, 461; AINI – Tirhut, 11.

[73] ASR – XVI, 3.

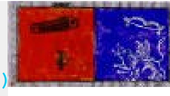
[74] ABORI – XXXV, 94.

[75] JANRS – I, 56.

[76] TM, 239.

[77] IHQ – VII, 685.

[78] HCIP – V, 35, 47.



[79] MB, 164-165.

[80] JBBRAS – XI, 268.

[81] EI – XV, 315.

[82] MB, 212.

[83] EI – I, 305.

[84] HCIP – V, 37.

[85] DHNI – I, 360.

[86] Ibid – I, 530.

[87] MTV, 100-101.

[88] Ibid, 98-101.

[89] ABORI – XXXV, 95 fn-1.

[90] HAIB, 473.

[91] ABORI – XXXV, 95.

[92] HCIP – V, 37.

[93] Vallalacharita (edited by H P Sastri, ASB, Calcutta, 1904), p. 16.

[94] MB, 216.

[95] Ibid, 241.

[96] Ibid, 216. How a reputed historian of his eminence has contradicted is evident from the above two quotations.

[97] JDL – XVI, 72.

[98] IHQ – XXX, 209.

[99] JBORS – XXV, 133.

[100] IHQ – XXX, 210.

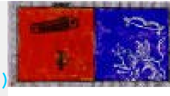
[101] Bhagalpur Gazetteer, p. 40.

[102] JASB, 1914 (NS – X), p. 97 ff.

[103] EI – XV, 278-86.

[104] JBORS – X, 44-46.

[105] PB, 103.



[106] JBORS – IX, 309-10.

[107] EI – VII, 98-99.

[108] JASB (L) – XVII, 29.

[109] EI – XXVI.

[110] See, Sources.

[111] IHQ – XI, 567.

[112] HCIP – V, 53.

[113] EI – VII, 85-93; DHNI – II, 747.

[114] EI – VII, 93 ff.

[115] JNSI – X, 72-74.

[116] R K Choudhay, 'History of Bihar', p. 101 ff.

[117] TK, 299-322. The question of Malladeva serving under Jayachandra does not stand historically verified. Tripathi (R S) has taken into consideration all evidence but he does not attach any importance to this story.

[118] Levi – II, 205-19; IHQ – VII, 689; DHNI – I, 206.

[119] JBBRAS – XI, 268; IHQ – VII, 683.

[120] IHQ – VII, 682; XXX, 208-9; QJMS – XLV, 1 ff; TM, 233 ff.

[121] ABORI – XXXV, 93 ff.

[122] D W Wright, 'History of Nepal', p. 167.

[123] Luciano Petech, 'Medieval History of Nepal', p. 53 ff.

[124] H P Sastri, 'Nepal Catalogue', I, 54.

[125] Petech, 54.

[126] Levi – II, 199 ff; DHNI – I, 203-4.

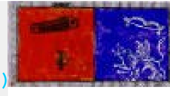
[127] ABORI (Silver Jubilee Volume), 1942, p. 299; Cf. Pratapamalla's inscription.

[128] EI – I, 305; JASB – V, 407; XI, 411; DHNI – II, 358; JBORS – IX, 302; XXII, 256; IA – IX, 188; XIII, 418; Levi – II, 189; TM, 233; ABORI, 1942, p. 299; R D Banerji, 'Banglar Itihas', Vol I, p. 318; ABORI – XXXV, 97 ff.

[129] Levi – II, 212-13.

[130] Petech, 52, 81.

[131] PIHC – X, 250-52.



[132] ABORI – XXXV, 98.

[133] HCIP – V, 47.

[134] TM, 251. According to some scholars, the assumption of imperial titles by Sivadeva in 1120, shows that Nanyadeva was killed before that date. Cf. JASB, 1921, p. 4. The assumption seems to be completely vague and wrong.

[135] D R Regmi, 'Ancient and Medieval Nepal' (1st edition), p. 145.

[136] JIH – XXXVI, 123-125.

[137] MTV, 97; Cf. MD; TM; BMI for traditional stories current about Nanya.

[138] JBORS – IX, 303; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar', G D College Bulletin No 4 (edited by R K Choudhary).

[139] JAHRS – I, 57.

[140] ABORI – XXXV, 98-102.

[141] PP – I, 3.

[142] PB, 86.

[143] ABORI – XXXV, 99.

[144] ABORI – XXXV, 99-100.

[145] ST, 62.

[146] MTV, 111.

[147] Ibid, 112. Vardhamana is said to have been serving under Malladeva. The inscription at Hati is ascribed to him. Cf. 'Inscriptions of Bihar'. Cf. my paper, 'The Later Karnatas of Mithila'.

[148] ABORI – XXXV, 102.

[149] MB, 170.

[150] TM, 264.

[151] Ibid, 233.

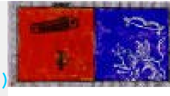
[152] Nepal Catalogue, 23.

[153] Levi – II, 210-13.

[154] MDG, 18 (Old edition).

[155] MTV, 112-13.

[156] TM, 264.



[157] Mulla Taquia's '**Diary**' published in Ma'ashir (Patna), 1946, and in Maithili in 'Mithila' (a weekly, now defunct).

[158] JIH – XXXIV, 325.

[159] **Purusapariksa** (Grierson's edition), p. 19 fn.

[160] JASB (NS) – XI, 412-13.

[161] TM, 266-67.

[162] MTV, 115.

[163] MD, 62; IA, 1880, p. 188; JBORS – X, 46.

[164] Todd, 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan' – II.II. 365.

[165] ABORI – XXXV, 107-8.

[166] Ibid, 110.

[167] Ibid, 110.

[168] ST, 62; Cf. ABORI – XXXV, 108.

[169] Archaeological Report of the Terai Excavations, 1901, p. 634.

[170] For different views: Cf. 'History of Bengal' – II, pp. 22-23; ABORI – XXXV, 108 ff; R C Majumdar's Chapter on the History of Mithila in the **History and Culture of the Indian People**, Volume VI for the refutation of the erroneous views of Dr K R Qanungo regarding Arimalladeva of Nepal; Cf. my paper, 'Bihar and Nepal' in the **G D College Bulletin Series No 4** for details.

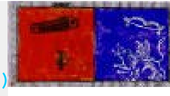
[171] R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar', Intrduction, p.20, Text p. 125. On the basis of the date in the Inscription, L Sam 212, it can be assigned to 1331 AD. This inscription was possibly incised in the reign of Nrsimha II of Ramadatta's **Danapaddhati**, though the image might have been erected in the reign of earlier Narasimha or by the order of his queen. Since Karmaditya did it, his name is also mentioned thereon. Karmaditya continued as a minister under Ramasimhadeva, the fourth ruler of the dynasty. Nrsimha II came after Narasimhadeva. He has been described as **Ksitipala**, crest-jewel of the Karnatas and ruler of **Mithilabhumandala** by Ramadatta. For details and discussion, see my paper, 'The Later Karnatas'.

[172] A terracotta seal in the Gupta and the Maithili script of the twelfth century AD is with me. It was published, with my permission, in the Epigraphia Indica by Dr D C Sircar and Texts have also been published by me in my 'Inscriptions of Bihar'. It is dated in the L Sam 67 (69?).

[173] Cf. Petech, p. 193. **Samvat 303 Chaitra Sukla Sri Narasimhadevasya Putra Sri Ramasimhadevasajata**; Thakura. Petech says, "The term Thakura is used in the Newai portions of all later Malla inscriptions and documents with the meaning of sovereign."

[174] JASB (NS) – XI, 413; JASB, 1903, Part II, p. 19.

[175] India Office MSS No 4741, folio 62 b.



[176] IHQ – XXXI, 287 fn; JASB (NS) – XI, 413, 432; Current Studies (Patna), 1955.

[177] JIH – XXXIV, 323-325; ABORI – XXXV, 110 ff.

[178] Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission (1951), p. 256.

[179] K P Jayaswal, 'Descriptive Catalogue of Mithila', Vol II, Introduction, pp. 10-13, also see therein the section entitled '**Kavyagranthani**', No 2.

[180] ABORI – XXXV, 110 ff.

[181] Petech, 193.

[182] Ibid, 194-195.

[183] D W Wright, 'History of Nepal', pp. 170-172.

[184] G Tucci, 'Preliminary Report on the two scientific expeditions in Nepal', Rome, 1956, p. 21; Cf. Petech, 194.

[185] Petech, 193; Cf. V3, Folio 36 b. Between 1255 and 1271, there is a tolerable accord between the **VK** and **VB** and later **Vamsavalis**. Up to that period, the accord is there but after that the divorce is complete. Between 1255 and 1271, Jayadeva and Jayabhimadeva were rulers of Nepal. The modern chronicles substitute for it the list of kings of Tirhut descended from Nanyadeva. ....According to Petech, this is a deliberate falsification of history promoted by the descendants of Jayasthitimalla, who wished to make out their direct ancestors to have been the kings of Nepal. Petech holds his views very strongly as is evident from his article in the **JBRS**, **Maharajadhiraja Volume**, **in reply to my article**.

[186] MDG quoted in TM, 274.

[187] ABORI – XXXV, 112 fn.

[188] Roerich, 'Biography of Dharmaswami', Patna, 1959, pp. 58-59. Dharmaswami has referred to the Muslim depredations in the region of Vaisali in some details (vide Supra).

[189] SHB – II, 46.

[190] Ibid, 52, 61-62.

[191] TM, 273.

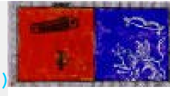
[192] MTV, 118-121; MD, 63; Mithila (a Weekly, now defunct), February 9, 1953.

[193] ST, 63; GPP.

[194] IA, 1880.

[195] Kirpatrick, 'An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal', London, 1811, pp. 255-266.

[196] JBORS – XXI, 37. Rahul Sankrityayana, 'Sanskrit Palm-Leaf MSS from Tibet'. The Colophon of the above MSS reads: "**....Laksmanadevasatapancasatabdivarajye ....56 srimadvirasimhadevastanyamanayam Tirabhukatausalmalipatakasthitya likhitamidam chatra sri subhankadasena .... Marga Sudi 14...**"



[197] Petech, 195. He holds that all princes after Ramasimhadeva, with the exception of Harisimha, 'did not definitely rule in Nepal.' They were kings of Tirhut and might have held some control in the hills on the border.

[198] BMI, 483.

[199] Ibid, 484. The events related by Mulla Taquia are not to be rejected outright as R C Majumdar thinks (Vide, JBRS – XLIII, p. 2). Mulla Taquia does not belong to a school of traditionalist rather he was a recorder of facts and he must have based his account on some source now lost to us. It is true that his account is 'confused and unconfirmed' (CS, 11). Petech doubts whether this date can be accepted as authentic (p. 195).

[200] Prakritapainglama (BI-Series), p. 327, verse 8; 304, verse 8; 187, verse 4; 180, v 3; 249, v 4; Cf. From my article, 'Vidyapati's Purusapariksa: An Important Souce of India's Political History' in the JOT, No 2 (now defunct).

[201] CS, 9.

[202] ABORI – XXXV, 163 ff.

[203] DG, 16.

[204] IA – IX, 188.

[205] PIHC, 1951, 255-56; MTV, 119 ff; MD, 61 ff; BMI, 484.

[206] India Office Catalogue – 1387.

[207] Chanda Jha, pp. 68.

[208] JBORS – XXII, RR – Introduction, p. 16; Jayaswal's contention is baseless.

[209] GPP, 47; JOT, No 2; RR – Introduction, p. 16; PP, Tales, 2, 8, 11.

[210] PP, Tale 22.

[211] GPP, 47.

[212] JIH – XXXIV, 326.

[213] Cf. Selected Papers of the All India Maithili Writers' Conference, 1956.

[214] Prakritapainglama, 107.2; 184.8; 185-187; 184.8.

[215] ABORI – XXXV, 114; Cf. my article, 'Harisimhadeva of Mithila: A Re-assessment of Facts' (included in this Volume).

[216] D R Regmi, 'Ancient and Medieval Nepal', p. 150.

[217] JASB (NS) – XI, 385.

[218] ABORI – XXXV, 117.

[219] DHNI – I, 185-86; Levi – II, 62-68; IGI – XIX, 25 ff.

[220] CSPMIO – II, 1414 No 7775.

[221] POC – II, 564.

[222] CSPMIO – 1411 No 7767.

[223] JASB – LXXII (1903), p. 14.

[224] Petech, 112.

[225] JBRS – XLIII, 2.

[226] ABORI – XXXVI, 163 ff; Cf. CS, 910-11; ABORI – XXXV, 115-116.

[227] JBORS – III, 516.

[228] BMI, 494.

[229] JBORS – III, 516; PUJ – I, No 2, p. 11 ff; HML – I, 27-31. For Maithili Karana Kayastha Panji, see Binod Bihari Verma, '**Maithili Karana Kayasthaka Panjika Sarvekshana**' (in Maithili), Madhepur, 1973, and R K Choudhary's article on the basis of this book in **Tantranath Jha Abhinandan Granth** (Darbhanga).

[230] MD – II, 15 ff.

[231] Ibid, 16; HML – I, 30 fn-78.

[232] JBORS – XXXIII, 55.

[233] TM, 380.

[234] CB, 125.

[235] JBORS – XIII.

[236] CB, 123 ff.

[237] ABORI – XXXV, 118 ff.

[238] IA – XIV, 192, 57; ST, 66; MTV, 144.

[239] BMI, 497 fn-1. Bhairavasimha is believed to have been the founder of the Sakarpura Estate in the subdivision of Begusarai.

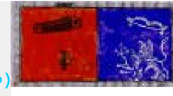
[240] IO MSS No 1714, p. 550.

[241] Vidyalankar and Mehta, 'Bihar', 209.

[242] JIH – XXXIV, 325; ABORI – XXXV, 107; Cf. my paper 'The Later Karnatas of Mithila'.

[243] JBRS – XI, 99 ff.

[244] Cf. my paper, 'The Later Karnatas of Mithila' (since included in this Volume).



CHAPTER X: THE LATER KARNATAS OF MITHILA AND NEPAL

[1] Cf. my article, 'Harisimhadeva of Mithila.'

[2] Petech, 'Medieval History of Nepal', p. 195; Cf. Rahul Sankrityayana's **List** published in the JBORS – XXI.

[3] यदि च गगनमात्मा वान्यधर्मेणान्य वच्छिन्द्धात् काश्मीरवर्तिना कुङ्कुमरागेण कार्णाट चक्रवर्ति (ललना) करकमल वाच्छन्द्धात् ।

[4] D C Bhattacharya, 'History of the Navya-Nyaya in Mithila', p. 59, ibid.

[5] R K Choudhary, 'Select Inscriptions of Bihar' – section on Mithila Inscriptions.

[6] Bhattacharya, op. cit., p. 71. The colophon is torn at vital places, yet we have: मिथिलेश्वरेण ....देवराज्ये देउला श्रीमत्कटके प्रीतपाटक सं उपाध्याय श्री गिरीश्वरंर्ल्लिखितमिदम् । ल. सं. 164 ज्येष्ट वदि 11 ।

[7] H C Ray; DHNI – I, 206.

[8] Cf. my paper, 'Sanskrit Drama in Mithila' in JBRS – XLIII, p. 28 ff (now included in this Volume).

[9] I O Catalogue, No 1621.

[10] The Newari text is with Sri D R Regmi. He has been kind enough to supply me with the following extracts: "(सं) 446 माघ शुक्ल तृतीया तिरहुति हरसिङ्ग राजा सन मिथिला सनसनता सत्त गहाटो ढ़ीलीस तुरक आके वङ रायत माना र पंथमु अगुगनयाङ वस्य सि रावन गड्ढ़ भङ्ग याङ तिरतिया राजा महाथ आदिन् समस्त वडङा व्यसन वङ्गटो ग्वलछिनोलिहु विखवः ग्वलं छिन राजगाम द्वलखा धारे वंग्व टिंपोटस राजा हरसिङ्ग टोशिंक, ध्वासकायनो महाथना ....राजगामया माझि भारो धायान समस्त धनकासान ।"

[11] Petech, 113.

[12] MTV, 144. He believes that Harisimha married a Kirata lady by which he had a son named Matisimha, after whom Motihari is named.

[13] Petech, 116.

[14] HCIP – V, 48; JBRS – XLIII.

[15] 'Bihar and Nepal' in G D College Bulletin No 4; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Mithilaka Rajanitika Itihas', Appendix 1.

[16] Levi – II, 226; JBRS – XL, 99.

[17] Rahul Sankrityayana, 'Nepal' (possibly it could come in print after his death. I consulted the matter when it was in the press).

[18] S H Askari, 'Current Studies', 1954.

[19] HCIP – VI, 418.

[20] I O MSS – 1714, p. 550: श्रीमन्नृसिंहो नृपः; Cf. Journal of Oriental Thought, Vol I, No 2.

[21] R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar', 125.

[22] RR, p. 20.

[23] HCIP – VI, 403.

[24] FOT, Vol I, No 2.

[25] Levi – II, 229.

[26] Krishnamachari, 'History of Classical Sanskrit Literature', 166. Cf. Aufrecht, Vol I, p. 415 (a) – he is identified with Bodharaja.

[27] Levi – II, 232.

[28] Now preserved in the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

[29] Petech, 151.

[30] Ibid, 152 for details.

[31] Ibid, 153.

[32] H P Sastri, 'Nepal Catalogue', p. XXXVIII; p. 264, No 1418.

[33] ST, 82-83.

[34] R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar', p. 125-126.

[35] Hamilton, 'Account of Nepal', 1819, p. 129.

[36] Ibid, pp. 129-136.

[37] Tanjore Catalogue, pp. 433-471; Cf. ST, 147.

[38] आलोकमुक्तैः सुमणौनिबद्धैः सुवर्णेस्तुरज्जिताया सा रामभूपस्य बुधोतमानामाकल्पमाकल्पतु कीर्तिरिषा The Colophon of the Siromani quoted by him in the Mss, now said to be in the Raj Library, reads – इति महाराजाधिराज कर्णाटचक्रवर्त्ति भुजबलभीम समस्त दिग्विजयपार्जित सम्पत्सन्तोषित निखिल भूमण्डल श्री रामराजकारितायां महामहोपाध्याय सङ्कुर श्री मधुसुदन कृतावनुमानालोक कण्टकोद्वारः सम्पूर्णमिति – ल सं 529 फाल्गुन शुक्लाष्टभ्यामध्ययनशालिनां श्री भवदेवशर्मणा भौरग्रामेSपूरीद मिति ।

[39] श्री रामनाथराजन्यो विष्णुसेवकः स्वेरेरदेवतलयो विष्णुर्नाम करिष्यति । The inscription was found in village Ladaho on the bank of the river Kamla. It is written in Karnata style on the pedestal of a Visnu image in black stone.

[40] MTV, 191-192.

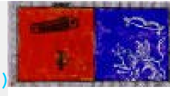
[41] R K Choudhary, 'Inscriptions of Bihar', p. 127.

[42] BMI, 497 fn.

CHAPTER XI: THE OINVARAS OF MITHILA

[1] This was sent to the XXIIIrd International Congress of the Orientalists at Cambridge, 1954.

[2] Grierson, 'Notes on Medieval Poets and Kings of Mithila', IA – XIV, p. 57 and 192.



[3] India Government MSS of Kirtilata – 2nd. Pallava p.3; Cf. **Danvakyavali**, R Mitra, 'Notices', V P 137 No 1830, **Ganga-Kritya-Viveka** – British Museum Catalogue, p. 75, No 198, Introductory Verse: कामेशो मिथिलामशासत् ।

[4] Briggs, p. 407.

[5] Bihari Lal, 'Aini Tirhut', p. 20. For details about this expedition in Mithila, see writer's paper, 'The Karnatas of Mithila'.

[6] JBORS, 1936, pp. 81-91. For the study of Haji Illiyas, also consult Al Badaoni, Vol I, pp. 309, 317 and 324.

[7] M Rehmani, 'Darbhanga ke Itihas' in **Mithila** of 16th February, 1953.

[8] Tale 22 of Puruspariksa. Cf. K K Basu, 'The House of Tughlaq', JASB (NS) – XXVI, p. 253.

[9] **Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi**, Elliot, Vol 3, p. 124; also Barni, **Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi**.

[10] Cf. Kameshwar was deposed by Firuz Shah in 1353, who gave the throne to his younger son, Bhogishwara who was his personal friend. He was not the younger son, but the eldest son (vide, P Jha, 'Mithila-Tattva-Vimarsha, p. 148). Darbhanga Gazetteer, p. 107. Vidyapati, 'Kirtilata' (Saxena edition), p. 10, where he is called 'पिअसख'. Cf. H P Sastri edition, p. 4 – पिअसखा भणिपिअरोज साह सुरतान समानल. According to Panji, Bhogishwara was the eldest son.

[11] Jha, op. cit., p. 147-48.

[12] M Rehmani, op. cit., 16th February, 1953.

[13] Rashbihari Das, 'Mithila Darpan'.

[14] Bihari Lal, op. cit., p. 19-28.

[15] Saxena, 'Kirtilata', p. 10 – जाचक सिद्धि केदार दान पंचबलि जानल ।

[16] राउ भोगिसर गुणनागरा रे, पदमा देवि रमान । N N Gupta, '**Padavali**', song no 801.

[17] Jha, op. cit., p. 149. Therein it is also stated that Bhaveshwara became king. This account does not say anything about the murder of Ganeshrai by Arslan, nor does it refer to Kirti Singh and Vir Singh's visit to Jaunpur.

[18] Kirtilata – पुरिसहु अहुबलराय पुरिसभगीरथहु ....परसुराम पुणि पुरिस ....इत्यादि ।

[19] Ibid, Pallava 2 – रज्जलुब्ध असलाने बुद्धि विक्कम बले हारल । पास वइसि विसवासि राएगएनेसर मारल ।।

[20] Ibid, p. 50-51 – तौन सेर विहार चापिन ।

[21] K K Basu, op.cit., p. 262-63. Bihar, then, did not include Tirhut. Rajgir Jain Inscription refers to one Malik Vaya, also associated with the Chakwara tradition, as official representative of Firuz Tughlaq. I am sure the scholars will throw more light on the career of Malik Vaya (JBORS – V, Part III).

[22] Jaichandra Vidyalankar and Prithvi Singh Mehta, 'Bihar', Patna, 1940, p. 211. Cf. Jayachandra Vidyalankar, 'Itihas Pravesh', 1952, p. 326.

[23] R C Mazumdar, H C Raichoudhury and K K Datta, 'Advanced History of India', London, 1946, p. 329. There is no mention of these historical events in 'Mithila Darpana' which is based more on traditional evidence. The chronological order, given in that book, differs from other sources.

[24] Grierson, 'Purusa-Pariksha', p. 185 .... 'after he (Bhavasingh) had enjoyed the pleasure of royalty, had conquered the surrounding regions, defeated his enemies ....had fostered suppliants with gifts of wealth' or 'भुक्त्वाराज्यसुख'; also called 'नृपति' 'भूपति' शैवसर्वस्वसार; सार्वभौमराजा in Misaru Mishra's 'Vivadachandra'.

[25] IA, 1899, p. 58; Introduction to 'Purusa-Pariksa', p. 10.

[26] Jha, op.cit., p. 149. According to this account, Kirti Singh after attaining majority, requested his grandfather Bhava Singh for throne but on being refused by his son, went to Delhi to seek Firuz's help. After having secured Delhi's help, he quelled and killed Hari Singh and Tripurara Singh and got back his kingdom. Mm Jha does not accept Vidyapati's version in toto.

[27] K P Jayaswal, 'Introduction of Rajniti Ratnakar', p. 23 (here other part of his contention is misleading).

[28] राझा भवेशेनाझप्तो राजनीति निबन्धकम् । तनोति मन्त्रिणामार्यः श्रीमान चन्डेश्वरः कृतिः ।

[29] K N Mitra and B B Mazumdar, 'Vidyapati', p. 32. (Abbreviation **MM**).

[30] **MM** (Five poems in Deva Singh's name) – No 1, 3, 4, 5, 6. He has been called Deva Singh Narapati.

[31] **Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi** (Elliot – IV, p. 29). Also, K K Datta, 'Introduction to Bihar', Patna, 1946, p. 19; Cambridge History of India, Vol 3, p. 251; Cambridge Shorter History of India, p. 262.

[32] Kirtilata – Pallava II.

[33] Jha, op. cit., p. 149. Jha is silent about the source of his information. He has taken pains to quote extensively from Sanskrit and other traditional sources in support of his argument, but here he does not give us any such source. The probability is that these two desperate princes, who took upon themselves the national responsibility of freeing Mithila from deteriorating conditions, ran from pillar to post for help. Their sincere effort was ultimately rewarded.

[34] **MM**, No 2; Nagendra Gupta, No 268 – महलम जुगपति चिरे जीवे जीवथु, ग्यासदीन सुरतान । (Abbreviation **NG**).

[35] Sir Jadunath Sarkar (EDN), 'History of Bengal', Vol 2, p. 117.

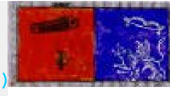
[36] I have not been able to locate him in Mitra-Mazumdar edition, though it is said to be mentioned in No 96 of Nagendra Gupta's **Padavali** (vide, M Chakravarti, p.423 fn-1). In his introduction, Dr B B Mazumdar has quoted a poem from **Rag Tarangini** (p. 36) attributed to Alam Shah.

[37] Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta, 1944, Vol XX, p. 211-17.

[38] Thomas, 'Chronicle of Pathan Kings'. According to this author, he ruled from 1443 to 1451.

[39] Sarkar, op. cit., p. 119.

[40] Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi, JBORS, 1927, p. 262.



[41] MM No 239 – राय नसरद साह भजल कमल मुखि । NG No 34 – राय नशरद साह ।

[42] MM No 31 – चिर जीवरहु पञ्चगौडेश्वर, कवि विद्यापति भने । नशीर शाह No 229 – पञ्चगौडेश्वर नशीर शाह ।

[43] S N Singh, 'History of Tirhut', p. 71. According to this author Bhavesha succeeded Kirti Singh.

[44] Op. cit., p. 416.

[45] Kirtilata, p. 38 – सिरि इमराहिम साह गुणेनहि चिन्ता नहि शोक । According to our poet, Ibrahim Shah was second only to God (vide, p. 50). All men were happy and enjoyed peace during his reign. See writer's paper, 'Jaunpur as described by Vidyapati'.

[46] Makhdum Shah – not yet identified.

[47] Kirtilata, pp. 76-80.

[48] Ibid, p. 100.

[49] Ibid, p. 102.

[50] Ibid, p. 98 – वाटसन्तरि तिरहुति पइठ, तकत चहि सुरतान बैठि ।

[51] Ibid, p. 144 – पातिसाह जसूतिलक करु किति सिंह भऊँ भूप । Kirtilata contains a good deal of information about this invasion and it has not been possible for me to include the whole details here. It throws a flood of light on the morality of the Muslim army.

[52] Kavya-Prakasha-Viveka; India Government MSS, folio 117 A – इति तर्क्काचार्य ठक्कुर श्री श्रीधरविरचित काव्यप्रकाशविवेक (के) दशम उल्लासः । शुभमस्तु समस्तविरुदावली, महाराजाधिराज श्रीमत शिवसिंह देवसंभुज्यमानतीरभुक्तौ श्री गजरथपुरनगरे सप्रक्रियौ सदुपाध्याय ठाकुर श्रीविद्यापतिनामाझा खोयालसं श्रीदेवशर्म बलियाससं श्री प्राभाकराभ्यां लिखितैषा हस्ताभ्यां [।] ल सं 291 कार्तिक वदी 10 ।।

[53] N G Padavali, p. 531. अनलरंध्रकर लक्कण नखई, समसमुद्धकर (पुर?) अगिनिससि । चतकारि छटि जेठा मिलिओ, बारि वेहप्पयं जाउलसी ।। Equated with L Sam era 293 and the **Saka era 1324 –293/1119 = 1412 AD.** 1324 + 78 = 1402 AD. These two accounts do not agree and is inconsistent with the above date given in the colophon of the Kavya-Prakash-Viveka.

[54] Jha, op. cit., p. 155-56.

[55] MM, No 89 – राजा शिवसिंह एकादश अवतारा । Ibid, No 140 – सिवसिंह सिव अवतारा । Ibid, No 13 – एकच्छत्र राजा । Ibid, No 21 – मिथिलाभूप । Ibid, No 57 – हिन्दूपति ।

[56] एवं श्री शिवसिंहदेवनृपतेः संग्रामजाते यशो । गायन्ति प्रतिपत्तनं प्रतिदिशं प्रत्यंगणं सुभ्रुवः ।।

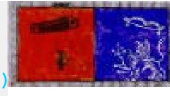
[57] Jha, op.cit., p. 159; Das, op.cit., pp. 66-68.

[58] Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1913-14.

[59] Briggs, **Ferista**, Vol 4, Chapter 7.

[60] Purusa-Pariksa:

ऊँ शैवसर्वस्वसार



शौर्यावर्जित गौड महीपालोपनभ्रीकृता –

जेकोक्कुङ्ग, जाश्च कनकच्छत्राभिरामोदयः ।

योगौडेश्वर गज्जनेश्वर रणक्षौणीषु लव्ध्वा यशो ।

दिक्कान्ताचय कुन्तलेषु नयते कुन्द स्त्रजामास्पदम् ।

तस्य श्रीशिवसिंहदेवनृपतेर्व्विज्ञाप्रियस्याज्ञया ।

ग्रंथं ग्रन्थिल दण्डनीतिविषये विद्यापतिर्व्यातनोत् ।। पुरुषपरीक्षा ।

[61] Sarkar, op. cit., p. 119.

[62] Vidyalankar and Mehta, op. cit., p. 212-13; Cf. Vidyalankar, op. cit., p. 332.

[63] Jha, op. cit., p. 156.

[64] MM, OP. CIT., P. 37.

[65] Ibid, No 9 – रामरुपे स्वधम्म सिख अ ।

[66] Vidyalankar and Mehta, op. cit., p. 212; also Vidyalankar, op. cit., p. 332.

[67] S N Singh, op. cit., p. 73. According to this scholar, Gajjan has been identified with a Muslim state near Tirhut.

[68] Jha, op. cit., p. 164.

[69] N N Das, 'Vidyapati Kavyaloka', p. ट. Cf. N N Basu, 'Social History of Kamrup'. He says that Amritkar was the chief minister of Siva Singh.

[70] Likhanavali, p. 2-3 –

संग्रामेऽर्ज्जुनभूपतिर्व्विनिहितो बंधौनृशंसायित

स्तेनेयं लिखनावली नृपपुरादित्यैन निर्म्मापिता ।।

[71] सर्वादित्य तनूजस्य द्रोणवार महीपतेः ।

गिरिनारायणस्याज्ञां पुरादितस्य पालयम् ।।

[72] जित्वाशत्रुकुलं –

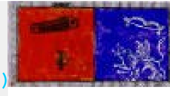
[73] That is why he is described as 'राज्य दुर्जन त्रिपुरसिंहखाड़े' in the Panji books.

[74] S N Thakur, 'Vidyapati ka Visudha Padavali', No 79 and No 86.

[75] N G No 723, Rambhadrapur manuscript No 410.

[76] Singh, op. cit., p. 83.

[77] Mm Dr Umesh Mishra, 'Vidyapati Thakur', p. 56-57.



[78] N G No 721 – त्रिपुर सिंह सुत अरजुन नाम । The fratricidal wars and family feuds are not very rare in our history. Mithila tradition contains at least this much of truth that just fter disintegration of the Karnatas, family feuds took ugly shape. There is every possibility that Arjun refused to keep the family of Siva Singh, because tht would be dangerous from the political point of view as the Muslims might take action against him for giving shelter to Siva Singh's family.

[79] शुभमस्तु स्वार्थगता लू सं 309 शुदि 15 कुजे राजबनौलि ग्रामे श्रीविद्यापतेलिपिरियाभित..From Vidyapati's own writings it appears that he spent about 10 or 12 years at Raja-Banauli i.e., from L Sam 299 (used in **Likhnavali**) to L Sam 309 when he completed the copying of the **Bhagavata**. There have been differences about this date.

[80] Vidyapati Gosthi, p. 18.

[81] Bendall, 'History of Nepal and Surrunding Kingdoms', JASB – LXXII, Part I, 1903, p. 27.

[82] Jha, op. cit., p. 169.

[83] Saiva-Sarvasva-Sara – संग्रामाङ्गणसीभीम सदृस्यतस्यानुजरसंलस-

दानस्वल्पित् कल्पवृक्ष महिमाSसौ पद्मसिंहो नृपः ।।

[84] MM No 208 पति पद्मसिंह जाने. Thakur No 25.

[85] MM, p. 39. They say that Narasingha came after Padma Singh. Hari Singh's name appears in **Bibhagasara** राझोभवेशाद्धरि (?) सिंहआसीत् –

Krtya-Maharnava (R Mittra, 'Notices V, 202, No 1886 and the **Mahadan Nirnaya**); Nepal manuscript, p. 122; Misaru Mishra, '**Vivad Chandra**'.

[86] Grierson (Edn), Purusa=Pariksa, p. 171.

[87] **Durga Bhaktitarangini**.

[88] JBORS – XX, p. 15-19.

[89] **Setu-Darpan**, final colophon.

[90] Durga Bhaktitarangini: शौर्यावर्जित पञ्चगौड़धरणीनाथोपनम्री कृता । **Danda Viveka,** Introductory verse: गौडेश्वर प्रतिसरीरमति प्रतापः केदाररायमवगच्छति दारतुल्यम....

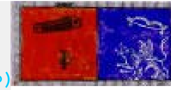
[91] Ruchipati's **Anargha Raghava Tika**: कंसनारायण ....

CHAPTER XII: THE LATER OINVARAS

[1] Kirtilata, edited by Ramanath Jha, Patna, 1970. The best edition hitherto available is one by Vasudeva Sharan Agrawal.

[2] Almost the same point is repeated on page 4 (Introduction). On p. 16, he doubts the historicity of the 'Kirtilata'.

[3] R K Choudhary, 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut', pp. 65 ff; Cf. MTV, Purvardha, 154. It is said that Devasimha ascended the throne in 1342 and died in 1402 AD.



[4] Riyaz, 101 fn.

[5] R K Choudhary, op. cit., 72 ff – for details.

[6] Hetukar Jha, 'The Oinvaras in the Mughal Period', in the JBRS – LV, 1969, Parts I-IV; Cf. Mithila Bharati, 1970.

[7] Irfan Habib, 'The Agrarian System of Mughal India', Bombay, 1963, p. 258.

[8] Ibid, 259, 275; AIN – I, pp. 285-88.

[9] IHRC – XVIII, 188 ff; Habib, op. cit., 173, 291 fn. Majority of the parganas in Bihar had come under **Zabt** (AIN – I, 417). All the provinces, apart from Bihar, were resumed to the **Khalisa** and placed under **Zabt**.

[10] Habib, op. cit., 316; PIHC, 1958, pp. 320-23. For political history of the period, Cf. R K Choudhary, 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'.

[11] R K Choudhary, 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'; Upendra Thakur, 'History of Mithila'.

[12] **Aini Tirhut**, pp. 27-28; R B Das, 'Mithila Darpana', 72; MTV, pp. 223-24. According to this account, Kesava was a resident of Haithivali. For Panji accounts, Cf. B B Verma, 'Maithila Karanakayasthaka Panjika Sarveksana', Madhepur, 1973.

[13] R K Choudhary, op. cit., p. 115 ff.

[14] BMI, pp. 11-14; Cf. my 'Khandavalas of Mithila' (infra), Mahesh Thakur is also represented as a priest of the Kameshwara dynasty. The Collector of Tirhoot in 1789 reported the matter as such. Kerr has based his report on this finding. For another point of view, Cf. F Buchanan, 'An Account of the District of Purnea', pp. 506-7; Cf. ST, pp. 234-35; J S Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj'.

[15] Augustus Prinsep, 'On the Traces of Feudalism in India' in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol VIII, pp. 401 ff, 1846.

[16] J S Jha, op. cit., p. 11; Important Firmans and Documents from the Mughal emperors are dated 1634, 1641, 1645, 1665, 1666.

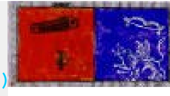
[17] In return for his services to the emperor, Aurangzeb granted the following areas to him:

i. **Province of Bihar** – Sarkar Tirhut including the valley of the mountain (sub-Himalayan tract on the north).
   - Zemindar, Milkiat and settlement of 102 Parganas.
   - Settlement of Pargana Dharmpur, Sarkar Munger: 1 Pargana.

ii. **Province of Bengal** – Sarkar Purnea: 5 Parganas; Sarkar Tajpur: 2 Parganas.

Total – 110 Parganas.

Aurangzeb's letter to Laskar Khan in this regard reads as follows: "Since the news of the sincerity and good services of Mahinath Thakur ....in the conquest of the country of Palamau ....and in the suppression of the Zemindars of Morang ....has reached the Exalted presence; therefore by way of grace and in order to honour the Sadar Zemindari and the settlements of Sarkar Farrukhabad alias Monghyr ....and the Zemindari of Pargana Haveli, Purnea and Tajpur ....and the **Choudharai** and **Qanungoi** of **Sarkar Tirhut which beling to the grantee** together



with a **Khillat** and **Mahimaratib** are granted in heredity ....to Mahinath Thakur. ....I have by an **exalted Firman granted him** the Sadar Zemindari and settlement of Sarkar Tirhut and Zemindari of the Parganas of Dharmpur ....Laskar Khan, too, should **bestow some consideration upon him which may honour him in the eyes of his neighbours and send him a letter of approbation assuring him of the permanent enjoyment of the Zemindari so that other subordinates may be spurred to similar good services**." Cf. IHRC – XXXVI, 90 ff.

[18] Hetukar Jha, op. cit.

[19] Proceedings of the Patna Controlling Committee, May, 1772.

[20] JBRS – XLIV, Part III-IV, p. 216, 1958.

[21] Proceedings of the Patna Council, July 1771.

[22] Cf. K K Datta, 'Alivardi and His Times', p. 14; Riyaz, ST, 219.

[23] Quoted in J S Jha, op. cit., 23.

[24] Ibid, 27 for details.

[25] Hunter, 'Statistical Account of Tirhut', XII, p. 210.

[26] J S Jha, op. cit., 53.

[27] Mithila Darpana, pp. 71-72.

[28] MTV, 224.

[29] Cf. MTV; MD; BMI – for details; MTV, p. 14 (Uttarardha).

[30] BMI, 117 ff.

CHAPTER XIII: CURRENCY UNDER THE OINVARAS OF MITHILA AND ITS BEARINGS ON THE CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY (C. 15TH-16TH CENTURY AD)

[1] JNSI – XIX, 98 ff.

[2] Biography of Dharmasvami, p. 98.

[3] Ibid, 100.

[4] Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati', Benares, 1976.

[5] **Br Upn**, III.i..i; **Panini**, V.1.341; EI, 1.178; Cf. Bhandarkar, 'Ancient Indian Numismatics', 68, 80.

[6] **Dhurtasamagamanataka**, pp. 21, 57, 63; Cf. p. 57 at the end of Act I – पिए दमटङ्कआ मए दादव्वा; Also, p. 63 – एसा मुर्व्वे मए विद्वादाउणदसटङ्कया।

[7] MM, No 56 – कउरि पठओले पाव नहिं घोर ।

[8] GR, 447.

[9] DV, vii-viii; VC (edited by G N Jha).

[10] Likhanavali, No 74.

[11] Ibid, 58, 59.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid, 66.

[14] Ibid, 75.

[15] Ibid, 61, 69.

[16] Ibid, 54.

[17] Ibid, 58-59.

[18] Ibid, 64, 65, 69, 70, 71, etc.

[19] Cf. Kirtilata: पानकसए सोनाकटङ्का; also, PP (Panthank), p. 87 for reference to coin.

[20] Rodger, 'Indian Museum Coins', Part I, 63 (one of them is dated AH 731); also Cf. Bourdillion, 'Catalogue of the Indian Museum Coins', II, 60.

[21] Cf. R K Choudhay (Ed.), 'G D College Bulletin Series', No 4; Indian Numismatic Chronicle, Vol I, No 1.

[22] ST, 88.

[23] Dorn, 'History of Afghans', p. 58.

[24] Ranking, I, 416.

[25] Erskine, 'Babar and Humayun', I, 541; Thomas, 'Chronicles', 390; Ed, IV, 262; JASB (NS) – XI, pp. 430-31.

[26] TM, 319 ff; JNSI – XIX, 98 ff.

[27] ARASI, 1913-14, pp. 548-49.

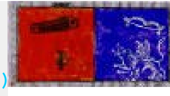
[28] Ibid, 248-49.

[29] HCIP – VI, 406.

[30] Coins of Medieval India, p. 54 (P1, VI. No.18).

[31] V A Smith, JASB – LXVI (1897), Part 1, p. 309. On p. 308, the obverse of the coin is read as **Shrimadvirasimharama**; Cf. Indian Museum Catalogue, p. 293; Rodger, 'Lahore Museum Catalogue', p. 12; Cf. H P Sastri, 'Nepal Catalogue', p. 20. Champaran kings were Vaisnava and that is supported by a set of coins discovered over there and now preserved in the British Museum with the legend, Govindacaranapranavamdana and on the reverse Shri Campakaranya.

[32] JNSI – XX, 55-61; 192-94.



[33] EI – XXXII, 329 ff.

[34] V A Smith, 'Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum', Vol IX. 1. 133. Also, Cf. ARASI, 1913-14, p. 259.

[35] JBRS – XL, 99-121; CHB; TM, Chapter V.

[36] PIHC – XXIII, 152 ff. So far as the basis of my statement is concerned, Cf. JBRS – XI, 112; Kirtilata, pp. 76-102.

[37] ABORI – XXXV, 92-121.

[38] MT, as published in Ma'asir, Patna.

[39] ED – III, 124; Kirtilata, 10.

[40] JNSI – XIX, 98.

[41] HCIP – VI, 406.

[42] Kirtipataka, Introduction, p. 5; Text p. 7.

[43] Ibid, 5.

[44] Ibid, 15.

[45] Ibid, 15.

[46] Ibid, 16.

[47] Ibid, 17.

[48] Ibid, 18-21.

[49] MM, Introduction, 37; for my earlier views, Cf. JBRS – XL, 115.

[50] EI – XXXII, 334.

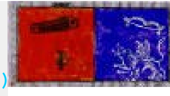
[51] EI – XXXII, 334-35.

[52] TM, 334; CHB, 160 ff; MM, Introduction, 40; L K Jha – VC, p.4.

[53] Cf. **Vyavaharacintamani**, edited by Ludo Rocher (Gent, 1956), p. 5; H P Sastri calls it a work of Bhairavendra with the assistance of Vacaspati. It is likely that Bhairavendra was dead when the work was completed and Ramabhadra was on the throne, Cf. Sastri, 'Catalogue', pp. 122-23.

[54] Kane, 'History of the Dharmashastras', I, 402.

[55] D C Bhattacharya, 'History of Navya Nyaya in Mithila', p. 147 ff; Cf. JBORS – X, 47-48; Durgabhaktitarangini, p 1; Anargharaghavatika, p. 2; ST, 75-76; Mitra, 'Notices', X, 58; Also, BORI, MSS, No 775 of 1884-87, Folio 71. It appears that there was some trouble in Mithila between 1425 and 1435. Vacaspati was a very fast friend of Bhairavendra.



[56] DV, Introductory Verses, 4-5; JBRS – XL, 119; TM, 332; HCIP – VI, 407. Cf. S Mukherji, '**Kirttivasaparicaya**', p. 40 ff. This information was supplied to me by my most esteemed friend Dr Bhakta Prasad Majumdar, Professor of the Department of History, Patna University; Cf. BTA, 394 – the conclusions therein are unwarranted.

[57] Coins are sufficient to show that Mulla Taquia has not recorded the facts correctly in so far as this aspect is concerned. For other details: Cf. my 'Bhagirathpur Inscription' in the PIHC (Calcutta, 1955).

[58] PIHC, 1955.

[59] HCIP – VI, 409; JASB (NS) – XI, 408; Riyaz, 134; JBRS – XLI, 6ff; CHB, 172; BMI, 544.

[60] See my paper on the L Sam era; Cf. the General Presidential Address of Mm V V Mirashi at the Delhi Session of the Indian History Congress, and Altekar's Introduction to the 'Biography of Dharmasvami', Patna, 1959.

[61] PASB, 1885, Grierson's article; Cf. H P Sastri, Introduction, p. 27.

APPENDIX

[62] Vide, 'Kandaha Inscription' by K P Jayaswal in JBORS – XX, Part I, pp. 15-19. Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Select Insciptions of Bihar'.

[63] Writer's paper, 'The Oinvaras of Mithila', JBRS – XL, Part II, June, 1954.

[64] Asiatic Society MSS of **Dandaviveka**, Introductory Verse 5. He is called 'Harinarayana' in the colophon of '**Anargharaghava-Tika**'.

[65] Nepal Notices, p. 112: Introductory Verse I of **Mahadana Nirnaya**.

[66] Mitra-Mazumdar, 'Vidyapati', Song No 216.

[67] JASB (NS) – XI, 426.

[68] Grieson, IA, 1885, p. 196; 1889, p. 58; Jayaswal, JBORS – X, 47.

[69] **Ragatarangini**, Baldeva Misra (Ed.), Darbhanga, Samvata 1991.

[70] Dr J K Misra, 'History of Maithili Literature', Vol I, p. 220.

[71] Wolsley Haig, 'Cambridge History of India', Vol III, pp. 255-56.

[72] Tabaqat-i-Akbari, III, 286.

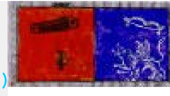
[73] Sir J N Sarkar (Ed.), 'History of Bengal', Vol II, pp. 145-46.

[74] Ranking's Translation of Al-Badaoni, Vol I, pp. 415-17; Cf. Elliot, V, 95-96.

[75] Bibhakara's 'Dvaitaviveka'.

[76] JASB, 1874, 304. Cf. Riyaz-us-Salatin, pp. 133-146.

[77] S N Singh, 'History of Tirhut', p. 88.



[78] Cambridge History of India, Vol III, p. 272.

[79] Riyaz, p. 134.

[80] Sarkar, op. cit., p. 147 fn.

[81] CHI – III, 272.

[82] P K Gode, 'Rasikajivana of Gangadhar Bhatta' in the ABORI – XII, 396-99. Cf. Dr J Choudhury, 'Rasikajivana of Gangadhar Bhatta', Calcutta, 1944. Also, Hardatta Sharma, 'Some Inknown Sanskrit Poets of Mithila' in 'Ganganath Jha Commemoration Volume', pp. 359 ff.

CHAPTER XIV: THE KHANDAVALAS OF MITHILA

[1] See my papers and books: i) **The Karnatas of Mithila**, ABORI – XXXV, 91 ff; ii) **The Oinvaras of Mithila**, JBRS, 1954; iii) **History of Bihar**; iv) **Mithila ka Samksipta Rajnitika Itihas** (in Maithili); and v) **Mithila ka Itihas** (in Maithili; unpublished when this manuscript was prepared, but this book was published by Shruti Prakashan, Delhi in 2010).

[2] **MTV**; **BMI**: It deals with the history of Khandavalas of Mithila; S N Singh, '**History of Tirhut**', Appendix; Bihari Lal, '**Aini Tirhut**'; Aufrecht, '**Catalogue**', I, 99, which refers to **MSS** entitled '**Mithila-Varnan**' by Kedar Sharma; Mitra (R L), '**Notices**' – I, 2023 – which refers to a **MSS** entitled '**Mithilesacharita**' by Ratnamani; **Khandaval-kulavinode** (Darbhanga, 1329), MD, p. 72 ff; Ghose's '**Indian Chiefs, Rajas and Zamindars**', Part II; Kerr, **Darbhanga Settlement Report** (1896-1903); Stevenson Moore, **Muzaffarpur Settlement Report** (1898-99); Bryne, **Purnea Settlement Report**; Hunter, **Statistical Account – Tirhut and Champaran**, pp. 208-14; R K Choudhary, '**History of Bihar**', '**Inscriptions of Bihar**', '**History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut**'; Lal Das, '**Virudavali**'.

[3] BPP – XLIII, No 85 (1932), p. 117.

[4] Cf. my 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'.

[5] It is regrettable that '**Bihar Through the Ages**' (BTA, edited by R R Diwakar) does not contain an account of this important dynsty of Mithila in the Middle Ages.

[6] I have seen more than a dozen of such pamphlets, genealogical tables and **prasastis** written on different occasions but unless they stand the scrutiny of historical test, it is impossible to rely on those evidences. P Jha (MTV – Uttarardha, p. 8) says that there was a copper plate. BMI contains some facts and the book is based more on fanciful imagination than solid facts.

[7] V A Smith, '**Akbar, the Great Moghul**', p. 486; Cf. Eggelling, '**Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS**' – VII, No 4106. '**Sarvadesavritanta-Sangraha**' by Mm Mahesh Thakur has since been edited and published by the Maithili Development Fund of the Patna University. It is useful for contemporary history. The MSS in Photostat copy is said to be in the Raj Library but I have not been able to verify it.

[8] Dr Irfan Habib has given a short account of the Zemindars under the Moghuls in a paper published in the PIHC, Trivandrum, 1958; also Cf. Irfan Habib, 'Agrarian System under the Mughals'.

[9] ED – VII, 138; JASB, 1873, p. 254; AA, 11; Bihar during the time of Aurangzeb had 252 Mahals.

[10] My 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'.

[11] Cf. J S Jha, 'A Peep into the Darbhanga Raj Archives' in the 'Indian Archives' – XII, 45 ff; Q Ahmad, 'Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj' (1574-1666).

[12] J S Jha, op. cit., F N I.

[13] Op. cit., 45-46: Important officials were present there.

[14] HMT.

[15] ABORI – XXVIII, 247-80 (Edited by G V Bhave).

[16] Published by G H Bhave in the Journal of the Nagpur University, 1940.

[17] ABORI – XXVIII, 250; Cf. Briggs, 'Feristha' – II, 217-18.

[18] Quoted, Ibid, p. 251.

[19] Hunter, 'Statistical Account', 1877, Tirhut and Champaran, pp. 208-14; Aini Tirhut, MD, MTV – Uttarardha.

[20] ST, 213.

[21] नवग्रह वेद वसुन्धरा, शक मै अकबर शाह; पण्डित सुबुध महेश को किन्हों मिथिलानाह ।। The traditional slokas are: आसीत पण्डित मण्डलाग्र गणिता भूमण्डला खण्डला । जाताखण्डवला कुलेगिरिसुता भक्तो महेशः कृति । शाकेरन्ध्र तुरङ्ग श्रुतिमहि – 1488 (sic) लक्षिते हविनेवाग्देवी कृपया सुयेन मिथिलादेशः समस्तोSर्जितः ।

[22] Ain-i-Tirhut, MTV Part II, p. i; MD, 72; Mithilanka (Maithili Section), p. 33.

[23] **Tuzuk-i-Babari**, pp. 50-51.

[24] Cf. रहै भौर क्षत्री प्रबल, बसत भौर निज ठौर ।

सूर समर विजयी बड़े, सब क्षत्री सिरमौर ।।

अच्युत, मेघ, गोपाल मिलि, मारौ क्षत्री राज ।

निज सुत लै भागी तबै रानी नैहर राज ।।

बहुत दिवस के बाद सौ, सजि आये पम्मार ।

युद्ध करन मिथिलेश सौं, सेना अपरम्पार ।।

[25] BPP – LXXII, 19ff.

[26] Badaoni – II, 166; Makhazan, 123.

[27] Beveridge, 'Akbarnama' – III, 252.

[28] The name Suba originated from the time of Akbar. It was an aggregate of Sarkars, Sarkars of Dasturs, Dastur of Parganas or Mahals. Pargana or Mahal meant a fiscal division. Cf. Riyaz, p. 7.

[29] For details – Cf. S H Askari' article in the BPP – XLV, p. 7 ff.

[30] ED – V, 409; Beveridge, op. cit., III, 418.

[31] ST, 217.

[32] Cf. J N Sarkar, 'India of Aurangzeb'.

[33] ED – VII, 137-38.

[34] MTV, Part II, 2-30; MD, 78.

[35] Mithilanka (Maithili Section), p. 12 – ल सं 509 श्रावण वदि 14 रवौ पुनः परम भट्टारकाश्वपति गजपति नरपति राज्यत्रयाधिपति सुरत्राणशासत् साहजहां सम्मानित नओनाथ हकीकत खाण सम्भुज्यमान तीरभुक्त्यन्तरित तीसाठतया संलग्न झोरिया ग्रामे ....

[36] PIHC, 1944 (Madras), pp. 350-51.

[37]Journal of the Bihar University, I, 79-80.

[38] Mithilanka (Maithili Section), p. 37. Cf. JASB, 1873, p. 241; J N Sarkar, 'Aurangzeb', III, 41; ST, 217-18. For details, my HMT.

[39] Jha, op. cit.; Ahmad, op. cit.

[40] BMI, 153-54; MTV – II; MD.

[41] Cf. नगहु खड्ग ध्रुवसिंह तोहि ऊपर यम चढ़ौ ।

मिथिलापति सौवेर दिन-दिन तोहि बढ़ौ ।।

तेकयत कुलवधिक एतो राघव नृप राजा ।

अरि दल दलन सम्मथ भीम भारत जिमि गाजा ।।

कवि कहत राम रे मूढ़ सुनु जेहि दिल प्रचण्ड भैरों रहत ।

ठहरे न फौज जाथ इति को जब सरदार खाँ तेगा गहत ।।

Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Mithila ka Rajnitika Itihas' (in Maithili); and 'History of Bihar'; 'Select Inscriptions of Bihar'.

[42] AT, 33. According to some, by Alivardi.

[43] Ibid, 32.

[44] ST, 95.

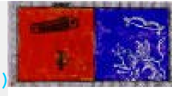
[45] R K Choudhary, 'G D College Bulletin Series No 3'.

[46] BPP – LXVI, No 129, 1946-47, p. 68 ff.

[47] Biru Kurmi was formerly a Khansama. Lal Kavi says:

वीर नगर वीरसाह का बसै कौसिकी तीर, का पति राखै कौसिका का राखै रघुबीर ।

[48] ST, 218.



[49] BMI, pp. 166-177.

[50] Ibid, 184-85; Cf. S T P, 221:

ऐसे महाजोर घोर गंग सुलतानी, बीच झुमत बबर जंग सड्गर करीन्द्र है ।

औलिया नवाब नामदार पूछै बारबार, वार ये दोऊ कौन अरि वानर परीन्द्र है ।

साहेब सुजान जयनुद्दिन अहमद खान सामने ह्वै अर्ज करै कवि चन्द्र है ।

ये तो द्रोणवार केशोशाह के अजीतशाह, आगो राघवसिंहजी के नवल नरेन्द्र हैं ।

[51] Riyaz, p. 296; Cf. Siyar – II.

[52] MTV – II, 54-55; MD, 82-83; BMI, 185 ff.

[53] BMI, 197-98.

[54] Ibid, 213.

[55] Ibid.

[56] रामनारायण भूपते कहो मुखालिप जाय । हाकिम को मिथिलेश ने दिन्हों अदल उठाय ।।

सीर करो तिरहुत को ताको रचो उपाय । फौजदार महथा भये संग सलावत राय ।।

बख्तसिंह कुल उद्दरन रोडमल्ल दिलपुर । चौभान भानु भानू सुकुल एक एक तंसूर ।।

याहि सभ तैनात करी फौज पांच हजार । दिगशूल सन्मुख योगिनी महथा उतरे पार ।।

सभै पेट बान्हयो कम्मर जड़ाना । पूछै राह में दूर केतै भवाड़ा ।।

खबरदार ने खबर करी नृप से कहउ बुझाय । पांच हजार सवार लय महथा पहुंचे आय ।।

किल्लाहूं ते कूच करि, कर मे गहो कमान । महाराज डेरा दियौ हरिना के मैदान ।।

रामपट्टी ते कूचकरि, पड़ौ अचानक जाय । तब डंका भुपति सुन्यौ ताजिम पहुंचे आय ।।

जाफर खां के दूज हालाराय, डंका दए, बक्सी चलए, चढ़ै खेत पर जाय ।।

महथा पेंच खेला कए, काहु देखायो बाट । चढ़ी सवारी पार ह्वै गंग दुआर के घाट ।।

सबै फिरि मैदान छाड़ि फौजदार भागी गौ । भयो फतह भूप का सुकत वाव बजि गौ ।।

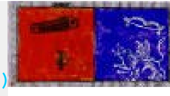
लूटि लूटि लायो सवति लिधुर लपेटे अंग । लाल सुकवि यहि भांति भौ, समर भिखारी भंग ।।

Cf. MD – PP, 83-94.

[57] BMI, 188.

[58] Ibid, pp. 214-15. Cf. Gopala Jha, ‘Khandavala Kulavinode’; M Jha Bakshi, ‘Khandavala Prasasti’, Mithilanka (Hindi Section), p. 177.

[59] G D College Bulletin Series No 3; Cf. R K Choudhary, ‘Mithila ka Itihas’ (in Maithili).



[60] Siyar – II, 593.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Hill, Bengal – III, 328.

[63] BMI, 226.

[64] Muzaffarpur District Gazetteer, 1958, p. 222.

[65] Regarding the dates of the rulers of the Khandavala dynasty, there is a difference of opinion. For the present, I have accepted the dates given ST.

[66] BPP – LXXIII (No 137), July-December, 1954, p. 127.

[67] J S Jha, op. cit., 47; Also Cf. J S Jha, 'The Darbhanga Raj Records Office with particular reference to the Educational Records' in the PIHRC – XXXIV, Part II, pp. 33-41.

[68] Fifth Report on East India Affairs, Vol II, by Firminger (Calcutta, 1917); Kerr, 'Darbhanga Settlement Report' (Calcutta, 1904), p. 19; Muzaffarpur Settlement Report; Ghose, 'Indian Chiefs, Rajas etc.', II, 1881.

[69] Cf. P C Roy Choudhury, 'Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records'.

[70] Cf. P C Roy Choudhaury, 'Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records', BPP – LXXIII (No 137), pp. 128-131.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid, pp. 45-46.

[73] Ibid, 52-53. No 37 and 40.

[74] Ibid, No 41.

[75] Ibid, p. 76, No 96.

[76] Ibid, p. 86, No 119; 87, No 122.

[77] Ibid, pp. 88-89, No 124.

[78] Ibid, p. 95, No 148.

[79] Ibid, p. 128, No 253, also No 263.

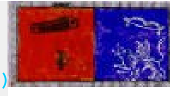
[80] Ibid, p. 130, No 266.

[81] Ibid, p. 140, No 315.

[82] Ibid, p. 156 f, No 376, 379, 399, 410.

[83] Ibid, p. 180, No 407, 409, 428, 433.

[84] Ibid, p. 193, No 449.



[85] Ibid, p. 207, No 494.

[86] Ibid, p. 214, No 523.

[87] Ibid, p. 331, Nos 784, 786.

[88] Ibid, p. 313, No 731.

[88(a)] The Trust was created by the late Maharaja himself as he died issueless. He has three nephews – Jiveshwara Singh, Yajneshwara Singh and Shubheshwara Singh. The Raj area, now, is the campus of the Mithila University.

[89] Cf. J S Jha, 'The Darbhanga Raj Records Office with a particular reference to the Education Records' in the PIHRC – XXXIV, Part II, pp. 33-41.

CHAPTER XV: MITHILA AND NEPAL

[1] Cf. **Svayambhu Purana**; Chapters 3, 1, 5, 7. **Varahapurana**; Chapters 145, 215. Also, **Nepal Mahatmya** of **Skandapurana**.

[2] The publication of a five volume 'History of Nepal' by my friend Dr D R Regmi is, of course, a major contribution in the field and may be regarded as the first scientific account based on original sources.

[3] Jayaswal, op. cit., 101.

[4] **Vajasenayi Samhita** – XXX.16; **Taittiriya Brahmana** – III.4.12.1; **Atharvaveda** – X.4.14.

[5] JASB – XVI (Letters, 1950), p. 162.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Nepal – II, 75 ff.

[8] The '**Kirataparvan**' section of the '**Vanaparva**'; Cf. The **Satarudriya** section of the white **Yajurveda** – XVI.7 for a similar tone.

[9] **Sabhaparva**, 26, 32.

[10] N N Vasu, 'Social History of Kamrup', p. 92 ; **Kiskindhakand**, 40, 27, 28.

[11] Levi – I, 78-79; Cf. Jayaswal, op. cit., 105.

[12] R G Basak, 'History of North-Eastern India', p. 239; Cf. S K Chatterji (edited), '**Kiratajanakirti**.

[13] JBORS – XX, 301.

[14] E H Walsh, JRAS (1908), 677.

[15] JASB (1950), 170.

[16] Somadeva, '**Kathasaritasagar**', V.3; XII.22. Ksemendra, '**Brhatkathamanjari**', IX, V, 728. Cf. Bharata's '**Natyasastra**', XIII, 32.

[17] Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 102.

[18] Manu – X, 22. द्विजातयः सवर्णासु जनयन्त्य व्रतांस्तुयान् ।

तान्सावित्री परिभ्रष्टान् व्रात्यानिति विनिर्दिशेत् ।।20।।

व्रान्यातु जायते विप्रात्पापात्मा भूजकण्टकः ।

आवन्त्यवाटधानौच पुष्पधः शैर व एवचः ।।21।।

झल्लोमल्लश्च राजन्याद व्रात्यान्निच्छि विरेवच ।

नरश्य करणश्चैव रवशोद्र विड एवच ।।22।।

Cf. II, 39-40; XI, 62-63. For Vratya, see J G Hauer, '**Der Vratyas**'. Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Vratyas in Ancient India', Benares, 1964; Cf. 'Tribes in Ancient India', p. 301; Cf. IA – XXXVII, 79. Dr B C Law says, 'Lichchavis were looked upon as Ksatriyas of Vratya variety.'

[19] Levi – I, 87-88.

[20] JASB (1950), 184. The **Somavansis** are said to have annexed Nepal near about 200 AD and continued their rule till 350 AD. The adopted son Bhumivarman seems to have shifted to Nepal after the emergence of the Gupta imperialism.

[21] IA – IX, 'Inscription of Jayadeva II', where descent is traced from Surya.

[22] IA – IX, 163 ff; XV, 342-51, 97-98; 'Cambridge History of India', I, 134-35.

[23] प्रत्यन्त नेपाल नृपति ।

[24] IA – XIII, 412; Levi – II, 91-92, 122.

[25] Levi – II, 92, 95-96.

[26] IA – IX, 178.

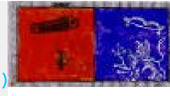
[27] Ibid, XIV, 97 (for Bendall's view); IX, 168 (for Bhagwanlal Indraji's view); Levi – III, 61, 79; Fleet, 'Gupta Inscriptions', I, 180 for details. Cf. Jayaswal, op. cit., 43.

[28] For the origin of the Lichchavis and other details, see B C Law, op. cit., 26-29; Modern Review, 1919, p. 50; Watters – II, 83; Rhys Davids, '**Samyutta Nikaya**', 259-89; Rockhille, '**Life of Buddha**', 62-63; IA, 1908. Smith's article; V A Smith, 'Early History of India' (3rd edition), p. 150; Beal, '**Romantic Legends of Sakyamuni**', 158-60; Manu, X.22, 43, 44.

[29] D R Regmi, 'Ancient and Medieval Nepal', p. 43. Hitnarayan Jha's 'Lichchavi' is no improvement in so far as the treatment of the subject is concerned.

[30] Ibid, p. 45.

[31] **Allahabad Pillar Inscriptions of Samudragupta**; Cf. **Arya Manjusrimulakalpa** (abbreviated **AMMK**), edited by K P Jayaswal and Rahul Sankrityayana, pp. 20, 21, 22.



[32] Regmi, op. cit., p. 96. Nepal's rulers had cordial relations with India and Tirhut. For Jisnugupta, see my article 'Jisnugupta of Nepal' in the JBRS. Cf. Gnoli's, 'Nepalese Insciptions in Gupta Character' (Rome). Regmi's above quoted work has since been published in different volumes. The local language historians of Nepal have also published a number of inscriptions in language journals published from Kathmandu.

[33] मंजुश्रीमूलकल्प (Text edited by Rahul Sankrityayana), p. 10.

Nepal: भविष्यति तदाकाले उत्तरां दिशिमाश्रृतः ।

नेपालमण्डले ख्यति हिमाद्रि कुक्षिमाश्रिते ।।549।।

राजा मानवेन्द्रस्तु लिच्छवीता कुलोदभवः ।

सोSपि मन्त्रार्थ सिद्धस्तु महाभोगी भविष्यति ।।550।।

विद्या भोगवती नाम तस्य सिद्धा नराधिपे ।

अशीति वर्षाणि कृत्वासौ राज्यं तस्कर वर्जितम् ।।551।।

ततः प्राणात्यये नृपतौ स्वर्गलोके जजग्मसु ।

तत्र मन्त्राशु सिध्यन्ति शीतला शान्तिक पौष्टिका ।।552।।

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इत्येवमादयो प्रोक्ता बहुधा नृपत्योस्तदा ।

अनेकधा बहुधाश्चैव नानारुप विवर्णिता ।।554।।

शास्तुपूजकास्तेSपि मलेच्छ राजा न है ।

वविषः सुवृषश्चैव भावसु शुभसुस्तथा ।।555।।

भाक्रमः पदक्रमश्चैव कमलश्चैव कीर्त्यते ।

भागुप्तः वत्सकश्चैव पश्चिमः ।।556।।

Fall of Nepal:

उदयः जिह्नुनोह्यन्ते मलेच्छानां विविधास्तथा ।

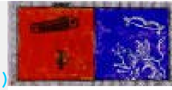
अम्योधे भ्रष्टमर्यादा बहिः प्राझोपभोजिनः ।।557।।

शस्त्रसम्पात विध्वस्ता नेपालाधिपतिस्तद ।

विद्यालुप्ता लुप्तराजानो म्लेच्छतस्करसेविनः ।।558।।

[34] Levi – II, 72; IA – VII, 89.

[35] Jayaswal, 'Nepal', 59. He connects the Gupta dynasty of Nepal with the Imperial Guptas (p. 61). Jayagupta II's coins were current in Magadha (p. 67).



[36] Regmi, op. cit., 72; Jayaswal ('Nepal') puts the date at 576 AD. Vamsavali records are confusing in matters of chronology.

[37] Levi – III, 105.

[38] Beal – II, 81; Watters – II, 84.

[39] Regmi, op. cit., 92. Amsuvarman died in 637 AD.

[40] For their identification with the imperial Guptas, Cf. JBORS, 1936, Part III, 244. This has been done on the basis of the coinage.

[41] IA – IX, 16 ff.

[42] Kirpatrick, 'Account of the Kingdom of Nepal', 1811, p. 255-57. Cf. Jayaswal, 'Nepal', 62.

[43] Regmi, op. cit., 74.

[44] Jayaswal and Sankrityayana, 'Imperial History of India', pp. 22-23. For details, p. 21. "The Lichchavi dynasty and Thakuri dynasty ruled together from the same place. The Thakuris ruled over western province." Cf. 'Gupta Inscriptions' (Fleet), p. 180.

LICHCHAVI RULERS

AMMK	INSCRIPTIONS
Manadevendra	Missing
Vrisha	Vrishadeva (c. 630 AD)
Bhavasu	Sankardeva (650 AD)
Bhakrama	Dharmadeva (son of Sankar)

THAKURI DYNASTY

AMMK	INSCRIPTIONS
Bhagupta	Ansuvarman
Jishnu	Jishnugupta
Udaya	Udayadeva

P. 22: "The Buddhist faith of the Nepal Lichchavis is attested by Yuanchwang, and of the family of Ansuvarman by the conversion of the great Tibetan Emperor through his chief queen, who was Ansuvarman's daughter."

[45] JASB – VI, 69-70; Cf. V A Smith, 'Early History of India', 366-7; JRAS, 1867-70, pp. 55-60; IA – IX, 20; JASB (Letters) – XI. Jayaswal, 'Nepal', 74; 'Imperial History', 22; Manchester Journal of Oriental Society (1911), p. 129-52; Missionary Journal (China), 1904; Asiatic Quarterly Review, 1910. Also, Cf. R K Choudhary, 'China, Tibet, Nepal and the Capital of Tirabhukti' in PIHC, Hyderabad, 1978, and my chapter in the 'Comprehensive History of Bihar' in Vol I, Part II, Patna.

[46] JRAS, 1880, 438.

[47] Levi – III, 14.

[48] IA – IX, 167 and 174.

[49] Jayaswal, 'Nepal', 89.

[50] JBORS – XXI, 81. Here we have to remember that the Lichchavi rulers of Nepal maintained connections with Bihar. Shivadeva, son of Narendradeva, was married with the granddaughter of Adityasena. Shivadeva was succeeded by Jayadeva. Jayadeva assumed the title of **Para-chakra-kama** (desirous of the domains of enemies). The epithets in the Pasupati temple inscription (having double meaning) lead us to believe that he had conquered or exercised supremacy over Anga, Kamrup, Kanchi and Saurastra (R C Basak, op. cit., 301). Levi believes that the verse is poetic (II, 170). Bhagwanlal Indraji did not attach any importance to it. Shivadeva's inscriptions bear the epithet '**Bhattaraka Maharaja Lichchavi Kulketu**' (Regmi, op. cit., 88).

[51] **Rajatarangini** (Translated by R S Pandit), pp. 142-44, verse 531-33; Cf. JBORS, 1936, pp. 251-53.

[52] Kirpatrick, p. 261; for details, Cf. Bendall, JASB, 1903, p. 21; D W Wright, 'History of Nepal', p. 153. For the Nepali Era, consult Wright, op. cit., 167; IA – XIII, 412; Levi – II, 175-79; H C Ray, 'Dynastic History of Northern India', I, 1230-32; Fleet, 'Gupta Inscriptions', CII – II, 74; JASB, 1888, p. 246 ff; G S Ojha, 'Prachin Lipimala', p. 38; IA – XV, 38; JBORS, 1936, 166; IA – IX, 183; Regmi, op. cit., p. 133-37. He says: 'But after Ansuvarman the Thakuris lost power and it was not until 879 AD that they could regain it. That year marks the end of the Lichchavi rule as well as restoration of the Thakuri dynasty.' (p. 137)

[53] H P Sastri, 'Catalogue', 54; Cf. Bendall's Introduction therein, p. 22.

[54] Jayaswal, 'Nepal', 100.

[55] Levi – II, 188.

[56] JASB (1950 Letters), p. 248; also consult Dr D C Sircar's rejoinder to Dr Mazumdar, published in the **Indian Historical Quarterly**, already referred to in earlier chapter.

[57] **Life of Atisha**, translated by Saratchandra Das in the Journal of the Buddhist Text Society, I, pp. 25-30; Cf. Levi, I, 167. Cf. Alka Chattopaghyay, 'Atisa and Tibet' for the latest research on the subject. Cf. R K Choudhary, i) 'The University of Vikramasila', Patna, 1975; and ii) 'Decline of the University of Vikramasila' in the Journal of Indian History, Trivandrum, 1978.

[58] A Coomarswamy, 'History of Indian and Indonesian Art', p. 144. For contemporary Nepalese history, also Cf. 'Historical Records Commission', XIII, p. 62.

[59] JBBRAS – XI, 268; IHQ – VII, 683.

[60] IHQ – VII, 682; Quarterly Journal of the Mythical Society, XLIV, p. 1 ff. IHQ – XXX, 208-9; TM, 233.

[61] TM, 233.

[62] Cf. my article, 'The Karnatas of Mithila' in the ABORI – XXXV, 97 (abbreviated Annals).

[63] TM, 233. For Nanya and origin of the Karnatas, Cf. my article in the Jaipur session of PIHC.

[64] Levi – II, 199 ff. H C Ray, op. cit., 203-4.

[65] Annals (Silver Jubilee Volume), p. 299; Cf. Pratapmalla's inscription; Cf. Annals – XXXV, 97.

[66] EI – I, 305; JASB – V, 407; Ibid – XI, 411; R D Banerji, 'Banglar Itihas', I, 318; H C Ray, op. cit., II, 358; JBORS – IX, 302; XXII, 256; IA – IX, 188; XIII, 418; Annals, 1942, p. 299 ff; Levi – II, 199 ff; TM, op.cit., 233 ff.

[67] Annals – XXXV, 98; Cf. Rai, op. cit., 7, 282.

[68] Regmi, op. cit., 145.

[69] S N Singh, 'History of Tirhut', p. 62.

[70] Annals – XXXV, pp. 98-102.

[71] 'Nepal Catalogue', p. 23 (Bendall's Introduction); Cf. Regmi, op. cit., 145-47.

[72] Levi – II, 210-13.

[73] Ibid, II, 213.

[74] Archaeological Report of the Terai Excavation (P C Mukherjee), 1901; Report, p. 634.

[75] Vide, Dr R C Mazumdar's reply to my letter, dated 22nd April, 1950, relating to the identification of Arimalladeva, mentioned in the 'History of Bengal', Vol II, p. 22, described as the king of Mithila by Dr Qanungo.

[76] Eggelling, 'India Office Catalogue', p. 412.

[77] JASB, 1915, p. 410. It was during this expedition that Khatmandu was stormed. These facts are now accepted by the famous Nepali historian Dr D R Regmi whose researches are no doubt praiseworthy. Even when rejecting our findings, he fails to be categorical in his statement. This is so because the available sources are conflicting and can be used both ways. Even Petech's comment on my article in the Maharaja Volume of the JBRS does not need any further elucidation at this stage.

[78] Levi – II, 220; for Muslim invasion of Tirhut see JBORS – XXII, 86; Briggs, 'Feristha', I, 406.

[79] IA – XIII, 414.

[80] Cf. JASB – LXII, p. 250; JASB, 1903, p. 12 (Bendall disbelieves the story of this invasion); JBORS, 1936, p. 615. The Thakuri prince Jayrajedeva was ruling in Khatmandu in 1346 AD; Cf. D W Wright, 'History of Nepal', p. 174, narrates the mythical story of Tuljadevi.

[81] IA, 1880, p. 189, Inscription No 19, verse 10.

जातः श्री हरिसिंह देव नृपति प्रौढ़ प्रतापोदयः

तद्वंशे विमले महारिपुहरे गाम्भीर्यरत्नाकरः ।।

कर्ता यः सरसामुपेत्य मिथिला संलक्ष्य लक्षप्रियो

नेपाले पुनराद्य वैभवयुते स्थैर्थं विधते चिरम् ।।

[82] Bendall, op. cit., p. 10.

[83] Ibid, p. 11. Bendall, at one place (Ibid, p. 9), observes, "In the reign of Anantmalla (NS, 408, VS 1344 or 1280 AD?) a considerable number of Tirhut families also planted themselves there." (Cf. Kirpatrick, p. 264.) There are evidences to show that during the Karnata period, there was a regular intercourse between Mithila and Nepal. The family of Harisimhadeva had a preponderant role in the contemporary history of Nepal. Cf. Regmi, op. cit., p. 155.

[84] Wright, op. cit., p. 180.

[85] Penceval Landon, 'Nepal', Vol I, pp. 37-39.

[86] IA – XIII, 414; TM, 285 ff; Annals – XXXV, pp. 118-19.

[87] Bendall, op. cit., 12-14; Mitra-Mazumdar edition of Vidyapati, p. 38.

[88] Oldfield, 'Sketches from Nepal', Vol I.

[89] Regmi, op. cit., p. 156; for details about Jayasthiti, see pp. 156 ff.

[90] Landon, op. cit., p. 39.

[91] Cf. Oldfield, op. cit., I, 23-25; Kirpatrick, 283.

[92] JBORS, 1936, Part II; H P Sastri, 'Catalogue', XXXVII says, 'One Yuthasingh ....helped the rise of the Sharquis.' No other source is there to support Sharquis connection with Nepal.

[93] IA, Vol 16, 183.

[94] Mithila influenced Nepal through different sources. There was a close collaboration between the two states and we know that after the flight of Siva Singh, Vidyapati (1414-16 AD) went to Dronwar king Puraditya of Saptari district (Nepal) for protections. He composed his 'Likhanavali' and copied the **Bhagavata** there. We further learn that Jagajyotimalla in collaboration with one Maithil, Vansamani, composed a treatise on music called '**Sangeet Bhaskara**'.

[95] S N Singh, 'History of Tirhut', p. 218.

[96] Ibid, 219.

[97] Ibid, 152.

[98] Ibid, 127.

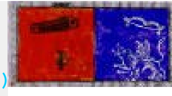
[99] For details, see my 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'.

[100] 'Cambridge History of India', Vol V, 377; for Mir Kasim, see my 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'.

[101] K K Datta, 'A Survey of Recent Studies on Modern Indian History', p. 92 ff; Cf. Champaran Gazetteer, p. 26, 31.

[102] Thornton, 'History of British India', IV, 253.

[103] CHI – V, 378.



104 Thornton, op. cit., IV, 257.

105 Ibid, 260.

106 Ibid, 265-66.

107 Ibid, 297, 298, 301, 302, 324, 332.

108 Ibid, 337-44; Cf. CHI – V, 378.

109 'Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to Nepal', Part III, Vol II. The whole account is based on this document.

110 'Bengal, Past and Present' – LXXIV, II, pp. 135-36.

111 Ibid, 138.

112 Ibid, LXXIII, 128.

CHAPTER XVII: THE LOWER ORDERS IN MITHILA

1 VR, pp. 1, 37, 42; Cf. R S Sharma, 'Social Change in Early Medieval India'.

2 Candesvara, '**Grhastaratnakar**', pp. 478-480; Cf. from pp. 352, 354, 361.

3 Ibid, 66, 9 etc.

4 Ibid, 165, 342, 339-41, 360, 362.

5 Ibid, 362 fn; **Vivadaratnakara**, p. 354.

6 Op. cit., p. 1.

7 **Krtyaratnakar**, pp. 12-13.

8 **Vivadaratnakara**, p. 583; also pp. 144-45.

9 Ibid, 144-45.

10 Op. cit., p. 11, 8; JBRS – LI, p. 131.

11 VR, 139-40, 14 ff; GR, 533; Kane, HDS – III, 483.

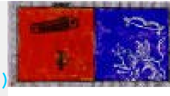
12 Ibid, 143-144.

13 VR, p. 153 ff; Kane, op. cit., p. 526.

14 Chetnath Jha's edition, pp. 38-39.

15 VR, 145 and 154.

16 Ibid, 156 ff; Kane – III, 476.



[17] VR, 146-47; JBRS – LI, 58-59.

[18] Ibid, 148 ff.

[19] L K Jha (edited), '**Vivadachintamani**', p. 71.

[20] Ibid, pp. 110-11.

[21] **Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi**, pp. 267-72 (Translated by A R Fuller).

[22] **Likhanavali**, No 59.

[23] Ibid, No 55.

[24] श्रीमत्कंसनारायण ..श्रीमल्लक्ष्मीनाथदेव ..तीरभुक्तौ ..जमुगामगामे श्रीगदाधरशर्मा शूद्रक्रयनार्थं स्वधनं पयुङ्क्ते । ... स्वशूद्रं कैवर्त ..श्यामवर्ण ..षोडसवर्ष वयस्कं नानामध्यस्थ .... सप्तटङ्कं मूल्यमादायमुष्मिन् धनानि विक्रीतवान ..... श्री मिसारुशर्मणः ।

[25] Likhanavali, No 57 – English translation of some of these is available in the '**Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati**'.

[26] Ibid, No 58.

[27] Ibid, No 60.

[28] Ibid, No 56.

[29] Ibid, No 58; No 55 for types of work done by slaves.

[30] Ibid, No 55.

[31] Ibid, No 84; Cf. No 21, No 67 about the process of freeing a slave; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Traces of Slavery in Mithila', Spark, May 1, 1955.

[32] JBORS – VI, Part II; for Jolly's views, JBORS – VII, Part 117; Cf. a document of 1615 regarding the sale of a slave:

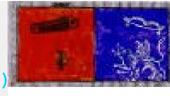
शाके 1537 वैशाख .... श्री रामचन्द्र शर्मा श्री कैलाशदासेषु गौरीवचाटिका पत्रमर्पयति तदत्रे इत्यादि हमरा वहिया क हराईक बेटी पदुमीनाम्नी गौरवर्ण जे तोहरे बेटा में श्रीकृष्णज विआहलि से हमे एक टाका लए तोरा देलिआवे ताहि सँ हमरा कओन सम्बन्ध नहि .....

[33] i) ल सं 528 .... श्री महथा देवी श्री कमलानयन मिश्रौ श्री उमापतिशर्मसु गौरीववाटिका पत्रमपर्यति भवत्सकाशादवाक्यां मुद्राद्वयं गृहित्वा भवद्दास विश्वंभर पत्नीमद्दास बालक पुत्री गांगीनाम्नी भवात्स्वत्व भारोपिता अतः परंतस्या अस्माकं स्वत्वं नास्ति ....

ii) ल सं 549 .... गंगापतिशर्माणि वेलओच सं श्री भोराशर्मा गौरीववाटिका पत्रमपर्यति देशव्यवहारेण गोराओड़ एक रुपैया लेल गतिराम कैवर्तक बेटी जलिया श्री गंगापति के .... विवाहार्थ स्वत्वं परित्याग कए देलियन्हि ।

The use of the term 'Rupaiya' indicates that some sort of currency had come to stay and 'Rupee' was the medium of exchange in this part of the country under the Mughals. Slavery was an integral part of the economic set-up of Mithila in the middle ages. They produced for the comfort of the upper strata and the laws were codified to safeguard the interests of those who possessed slaves.

It should be noted here that Sachala Misra in his judgement has quoted from the writings of Misaru Misra and Harinath Upadhyay on the issue of the slaves and slave trade. .... Possession over hundred years in respect of the



proprietary right over slaves was considered necessary and it was on this basis that Sachala Misra delivered his judgement in favour of Maninath against Tulanath.

[34] J K Mishra, 'History of Maithili Literature, I, 385 ff.

[35] J S Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj'.

CHAPTER XVIII: VIDYAPATI AND HIS CONCEPTION OF KINGSHIP

[1] PP, Tale 20. Vidyapati says, 'Kautilya whose wrath hurled the nine Nandas to the abode of the god of death, and whose favour endowed Chandragupta, the Vrsala, a kingdom unopposed, Canakya, a second Brahma on this earth was famed all the world over for his learning and wisdom.

[2] दण्डविवेक, पृ 8 – समीक्ष्य सधृतः सम्यक् सर्वा रञ्जयति प्रजाः ।

[3] मन्त्रमूले चेतो राज्यमतो मंत्रे सुरक्षितम् ।

[4] Mallinatha in his Commentary on **Raghuvamsa** (iv.8) and (viii.9) quotes the following: तीक्ष्णश्चैव मृदुश्चैव प्रजानां स च संमतः ... दण्डेण नृपतिस्तस्माद्युक्तदण्डः प्रशस्यते । Cf. **Brihad Upa.** 1.4.11, where Dharma is equated with Truth. According to **Suttanipata**, Dharma-analysis is the discernment of an eternal, orderly conditioned sequence of things.

[5] MM, No 57.

[6] PP, Tales 17, 18; Cf. the song of Parijataharana:

धरमप्रजा परिपालथु राजा । चारुवरण करथूनि अकाजा ।।

वामन वेदखेद जनु पावे । साधु के संग आन जनु आवे ।।

[7] VR, Kallola, 2, 5.

[8] Parijataharana, p.30 : भूमेः भारनिवारणाय दुरित्छेदाय शुद्धात्मानाम् ।

वेदार्थ व्यवहारणाय च परित्राणाय धर्मस्य च ।।

दर्पस्य प्रशमाय दुष्टमनसां देवद्विजद्रोहिणाम् ।

ब्रह्मेन्द्रादिमदक्षयाय च मया लब्धोऽवनारो भुवि ।।

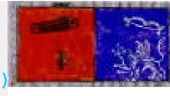
[9] Cf. my paper, 'Jaunpur As Described by Vidyapati in His Kirtilata', JUPHS, Lucknow, 1956-57.

[10] PP, Tale 6; fate of state was tagged with king. Also, Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Kautilya's Political Ideas and Institutions', Benares, 1971; 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut', Benares, 1970; and 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati', Benares, 1976.

[11] JASB (Letters) – XVI, 269.

CHAPTER XIX: VIDYAPATI'S FAITH

[1] R G Bhandarkar, **Collected Works**, Vol IV, pp. 1-124 (Poona, 1929). H C Raychaudhuri, 'Early History of Vaisnava Sect'; S K De, 'Vaisanavism'; S N Dasgupta, 'A History of Indian Philosophy'; R P Chanda, 'Indo-Aryan Races'.



[2] In the **Mahabharata** and some of the **Puranas**, a number of **Avataras** is mentioned, but an attempt at systemisation is first made in the **Bhagavata Purana**, where there are three lists of **Avataras**, of 22, 23 and 16 respectively. Pala inscriptions refer to Varaha, Nrisimha, Vamana, and Parasurama **Avataras**. Jayadeva gives a list of ten **Avataras**.

[3] Panini, IV, 3, 98; Vide JRAS, 1910, p. 168.

[4] Gita, VII.19. Cf. **Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya**.

[5] Inscriptions of Bengal, p. 19.

[6] Grierson's Introduction in the JBORS, Vol III, Part I, pp. 22, 23: 'The story is told in chapters 124-135 of the **Harivamsa** and somewhat different versions are given in the **Visnu Purana** (V. 30-31) and in the **Bhagavata Purana** (X. 59). He follows the **Harivamsa** account, departing from it in one particular, i.e., Krsna's assistant in the fight with Indra was, according to him, not his son Pradyumna, but his friend Arjuna Dhananjaya. All the songs are in Maithili. Mithila has for centuries been celebrated for the graceful lyrics ....and the most famous name is Vidyapati whose songs were adopted by the Vaisnava reformer Caitanya. ...'

[7] R Mitra, 'Notices', V, p. 149, No 1139.

[8] P V Kane, 'History of the Dharmasastras', Vol I, p. 401.

[9] Grierson's edition of **Purusapariksa**, Tale 7.

[10] Ibid, Tale 42.

[11] Ibid, Tales 36, 43 and p. 123.

[12] Had Vidyapati been a strong believer in any other sect, he would have taken another character, of which there is no dearth in Indian legend, as his hero. This particular point may help us in ascertaining his actual and personal inclination, and if studied in the light of his copying the **Bhagavata**, we are doubly sure on this point.

[13] S S Das, 'Hindi Sahitya' (Prayag, 1944), pp. 273-74. Cf. 'Hindi Me Vaisnava Sahitya Ke Pratham Kavi', p. 170; 'Bhakti Kavya Ke Pratham Bare Kavi', p. 180.

[14] **Lila** is **moksa – Lilavattu kaivalyam; lilaya sarvam prayojanatavat**.

[15] Grierson, 'Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan', pp. 9-10.

[16] JASB, 1882, Part I, p. 29.

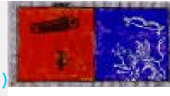
[17] Beames, 'Vidyapati and his Contemporaries', p. 31.

[18] Mitra-Mazumdar, 'Vidyapati', Song No 855.

[19] Indian Historical Quarterly, December 1947, p. 278.

[20] Ibid, pp. 281-82.

[21] Ibid. Cf. **Brihadaranyaka Upanisad**, IV.3.21.



[22] **Agni Purana**, Chapter 339. II.

[23] S K Chakravarti, 'Vaisnava Sahitya', p. 139.

[24] Ibid, pp. 210, 247; Cf. C R Das, 'Kavyer Katha', pp. 36, 40.

[25] About 195 such poems on Viraha, Nos 467-569 and 719-57 (Mitra-Mazumdar edition of Vidyapati) are there.

[26] Vidyapati's **Gangavakyavali**. Cf. His **Purusapariksa**. Cf. His **Vibhagasar** for a similar passage.

[27] N N Dass, 'Vidyapati Kavyaloka', p. 21.

[28] D C Sen, 'Madhyayuger Vaisnava Sahitya', p. 149.

[29] D C Sen and K N Mitra, 'Vaisnava Padavali', Calcutta, 1930, Introduction.

[30] Grierson, 'Linguistic Survey of India', Vol I, Part I, p. 149.

[31] Mitra-Mazumdar ed. Nos 41, 89, 103 and 185. Ibid, No 177: It has been taken by the Bengal Vaisnavas with a slight modification in **bhanita**. (Vide **Padakalpataru**, No 1879).

[32] Ibid, p. 93; This indirectly hints that the rest of his poems are devoted to Radha-Krishna.

[33] Ibid, No 218 and p. 497.

[34] Ibid, Nos 543 and 549.

[35] Ibid, Nos 535, 554.

[36] Ibid, Nos 478, 479, 480, 481 and 482 are without reference to any king.

[37] Ibid, Nos 335 and 337, without bhanita.

[38] Ibid, No 337.

[39] Ibid, Nos 539, 546. The last number is a fine piece depicting Radha's restlessness for Krsna.

[40] Ibid, No 757. Cf. **Bhagavata**, X. iii.

[41] Ibid, No 769.

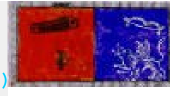
[42] Ibid, No 771.

[43] Ibid, No 768. There is a good deal of controversy over the authorship of this poem. Cf. Dr S K Bandopadhyaya, 'Bangla Sahityer Katha', pp. 22-23 (Quoted in Mitra-Mazumdar, p. 499; they also ascribe it to Vidyapati).

[44] Ibid, No 770.

[45] Ibid, p. 86. For Vidyapati's sect Cf. S N Thakur, 'Mahakavi Vidyapati', pp. 157-81; N N Das, op. cit., pp. 1-24. He takes a more sober view and calls him **vastutantravadi** (realist), Mitra-Mazumdar ed., pp. 95-103. The chart given therein is very useful. Both Dr Umesh Mishra and his son Dr J K Mishra hold the purely traditional view.

[46] For an exhaustive discussion, Cf. Dakshinaranjana Ghosh, '**Vaisnava Gitanjali**', pp. 1-50.



[47] Dr J K Mishra, 'History of Maithili Literature', Vol I, pp. 160-1; Cf. S K De, op. cit., p. 1 fn-1; pp. 7-10 and 412.

[48] Mitra-Mazumdar, No 704.

[49] Rabindranath's letter to N N Dass, dated 23-11-1937.

CHAPTER XX: SANSKRIT DRAMA IN MITHILA

[1] The discovery of a judgement in Sanskrit bears testimony to this fact.

[2] For Mithila's contributions to different aspects of Sanskrit literature – Cf. Jyotisacharya Pt Baladeva Misra's article in **Ramcharitra Abhinandana Grantha**.

[3] **Malavikagnimitram**, I. 4.

[4] **Malatimadhava**, I. 6.

[5] **Dasarupaka**, I. 6.

[6] **Natyasastra**, XVIII. 43.

[7] Cf. **Vedic Index**.

[8] Sudraka's '**Mrichchakatika**' is an example of how drama really represented people's mood and culture.

[9] For details, see my paper, 'The Karnatas of Mithila' in the ABORI – XXXV.

[10] **Abhinavagupta – An Historical and Philosophical Study**', pp. 121-123.

[11] A B Keith, 'Sanskrit Drama', p. 318.

[12] Cf. S K De's article, 'The Santarasa in the Natyasastra and Dasarupaka' in the Siddhabharati, Vol I, p. 233 ff.

[13] ii. 34 as composed with vii. 83.

[14] It is on this slender evidence that Murari is considered to be a Maithila; Cf. Jayaswal, 'Catalogue' – II, P. 11.

[15] Nirnayasagar edition.

[16] AR – V, 6; VII, 107; VII, 90.

[17] M Krishnamachariar, 'History of Classical Sanskrit Literature', p. 638 ff.

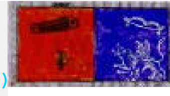
[18] अंकोत्थनाटक खोत्तमनायकस्य नाशंकविर्व्यधतयस्य मुरारित्थम् । XXXVII, 167.

[19] For details about Murari, Cf. DMG – XXVII, 74; XXXVI, 377 ff; GG – I, 462; II, 106; Bhandarkara's Report, 1897, XX; XL, Wilson, 'Theatre' – II, 375.

[20] Cf. S N Singh, op. cit., p. 151.

देवीं वाचमुपासते हि बहवः सारंतु सारस्वतं

जानीते नितरामसौ गुरुकुलक्लिष्टो मुरारि कविः ।



अब्धिर्लङ्घित एव वानरभटैः किंत्वस्य गम्भीरता

मापातालं निमग्न पीवरतनुर्जानाति मंथाचलः ।।

मुरारिपद चिन्तायां भवभूतेस्तु का कथा

भवभूतिं परित्यज्य मुरारिमुररीकुरु ।।

The **Sarangadharpaddhati** says:

भवभूतिमनादृत्य निर्वामतिनामया ।

मुरारि पदचिन्तायामिदमाधीयते मनः ।।

From a **commentary** on the AR by Chatrakara, we learn that Ramasimhadeva, son of Narasimhadeva, defeated the Turuska king.

[21] The aim of Murari's AR was to remove the unpleasant feelings of the audience, created by the earlier writers. The Sutradhara's description at the beginning probably refers to the **Mahaviracharitam**, and the **Malatimadhava** of Bhavabhuti. Murari is called Bala-Valmiki.

[22] K P Jayaswal, 'Catalogue of Mithila MSS', II, p. 1.

[23] Sri Umakant Thakur has drawn my attention towards this commentary.

[24] Cf. Krsnadatta Maithila's works.

[25] For details, see my 'Heretical Sects in the Puranas' in the ABORI of 1957.

[26] Edited by C Cappaller and analysed by Wilson, 'Theatre' – II, 408. It was published in Lithograph but it is not available now. Probably it was meant for private circulation. Jayakant Misra of the Allahabad University informed me that he had been able to discover another drama of Jyotirisvara in Nepal.

[27] R L Mitra, 'Notices', I, p. 48.

[28] The details have been procured by my friend Sri Umakant Thakur.

[29] There are four printed editions of this work: i) Published by the Maithili Publishing Company, Darbhanga, 1893; ii) Re-edited by Chanda Jha; iii) Edited by Pt Chetnath Jha; and iv) Edited and published by G A Grierson i the JBORS – III, pp. 20-90.

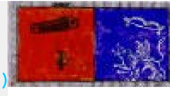
[30] Catalogue Catalogorum, I, p. 70.

[31] 'History of Maithili Literature', Vol I, p. 301.

[32] Singh, op. cit., p. 174 ff. Farquhar in his 'Outline of Religious Literature' (pp. 306, 378) says that one Umapatidhara was a contemporary of Vidyapati at Tirhut in the 15th century AD. Also, Cf. JBBRAS – XXXIV, XLIII, 76; ZDMG – XL; JDL – XVI, 44.

[33] JBORS – III, 21.

[34] JBORS – III, 25.



ejournal विदेह प्रथम मैथिली पाक्षिक ई पत्रिका'विदेह' १५० म अंक १५ मार्च २०१४ (वर्ष ७ मास ७५ अंक १५०) मानुषीमिह संस्कृताम् ISSN 2229-547X VIDEHA

[35] Ibid. Cf. JASB, 1835, p. 122 ff; IA – VII, 89 ff, IX, 188, XIII, 414; JASB (NS) – XI, 407 ff. Rasbeharidasa, 'Mithila Darpana', I, 60 ff.

[36] PH: सूत्रधार says – यवनवनच्छेदनकरालकरवालेन विच्छेद गत ।

[37] Upendra Thakur, op. cit., Chapter VII; Cf. my 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut' and 'History of Bihar'.

[38] JBORS – III, 25; Chetnath Jha, PH, p. 11; Pustak Bhandar Jayanti Smaraka Grantha, p. 10; Hindustani (April, 1935), pp. 113-130. Umapati was son of Ratnapati or Ramapati.

[39] PH – पारावारो गुणानामयमतुलगुणः पातु वो मैथिलेशः ।

[40] JBORS – III, 553-57.

[41] HML – I, 306-7.

[42] JBORS – III, 29: सकल नृपति पति; p. 42: सकल नृपति पति हिन्दुपति; also Cf. pp. 43, 53 etc.

[43] Cf. **Danaratnakara**; **Krtyaratnakara. Dhurtasamagamanataka** – नानायोध विरुद्ध निर्जितसुरत्राणस्यसद्वाहिनी ।

[44] This fact is supported by a Ms **Basatinuluns**, now preserved in the British Museum, and also in the Leningrad (now St Petersberg) Museum. Also, my 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut'.

[45] Upendra Thakur, op. cit., Harisimhadeva; ABORI – XXXV & my 'History of Bihar'.

[46] Cf. Hindustani, April 1935, pp. 115-6; JDL, 1927, p. 44; Madhuri, II, P1, II, pp. 749-50; also, Bajranga Varma's article in 'Sahitya', 1957.

[47] Cf. my article 'Bihar and Nepal (600 BC to 1815 AD)' in G D College Bulletin, Series No 4.

[48] Cf. Vangiya Sahitya Parishad Patrika (Bangabda 1336), p. 172 ff.

[49] H P Sastri, 'Nepal Catalogue', Preface, XXXVII ff. Cf. details, Kumar Gangananda Singh's article in the JASB (NS) – XVIII (1922), p. 253 ff; XX (1924), p. 73 ff.

[50] A Four Act Drama 'Ramayana' was written in 1360 AD in Nepal. Cf. H P Sastri, op. cit., XXXVII ff.

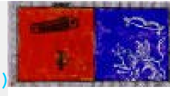
[51] J K Mishra, op. cit., I, 255 says: "The first known writer who introduced vernacular in Sanskrit was Vidyapati Thakur. Unfortunately we have no trace of his practice having been continued immediately after him in Mithila proper." I personally do not agree with the first part of his observation.

[52] A B Keith, op. cit., p. 243; for Vidyapati, also consult Mitra-Mazumdar, 'Vidyapati' and Subhadra Jha, 'The Songs of Vidyapati'.

[53] S N Thakur, 'Mahakavi Vidyapati', pp. 48-49, 86. Recently Pandita Visnulal Jha Sastri has also discovered a ms of this nataka. This nataka has since been published by the Patna University.

[54] Cf. my article 'गीतिनाट्यकार विद्यापति' published in the volume prepared on the occasion of the first All India Maithili Writers' Conference, held at Darbhanga, in November 1956.

[55] Published in Bombay in 1894.



[56] PR – IV, 5. Jayadeva seems to have imitated Murari, Read II, 34 as compared with VII, 83.

[57] Keith, op. cit., p. 246.

[58] Aufrecht, 'Catalogus and Catalogorum', Vol I.

[59] Singh, op. cit., 137, a view which he confounds on p. 138.

[60] चन्द्रलोकममुंस्वयं वितनुते पीयूषवर्षः कृती – Jayadeva of the **Gitagovinda** fame was decidedly different from the author of the PR.

[61] **Chandraloka** (Bombay, edn. 1914). I. 16; PR (Calcutta edn. 1872), p. 6.

[62] Two verses of the PR are quoted in the **Sarangdharapaddhati** (dated 1463 AD). For details, Cf. S Levi, '**Le Theatre Indien**', p. 281.

[63] PR, p. 7 – येषां कोमलकाव्य कौशलकला लीलावती भारती ।

तेषां कर्क शतर्कवक्रवचनोद् गारेSपि किं हीयते ।।

यैः कान्ताकुचमण्डले कर रुहाः सानन्दमारोपिता ।

स्तैः किं मतकरीन्द्र कुम्भ शिखरे नारोपणीयाः शरा ।।

[64] The text was edited in 1917 by R Schmidt (Leipzig).

[65] Keith, op. cit., p. 221.

[66] Quoted in Gangadatta's **Bhrngahita**.

[67] Aufrecht, Vol II, 236.

[68] Ibid, Vol I, p. 626.

[69] Jayaswal, 'Catalogue' – II, 56, No 53 A: The colophon of No 53 says – ल सं 581 कार्तिक कृष्णैकादश्यां तिथौ देसआलग्रामे महामहोपाध्याय श्री विश्वनाथकरणेन ....

[70] Notices – III, p. 52, No 83.

[71] H P Sastri, 'Nepal Catalogue', I, 49.

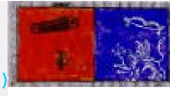
[72] It is doubtful whether Sankar, the dramatist, was the same as one who wrote commentaries on **Darsana** and the **Gitagovinda**, because there is difference of opinion with regard to their parentage and ancestry.

[73] It is in possession of Sri Narendranatha Dasa of Sakhawar.

[74] Quoted from Misra's HML, p. 300.

[75] Nepal Catalogue, p. 17. Probably the Bihar Research Society also noticed this **ms**.

[76] The **ms** of the **Nalacharita** is in possession of Sri N N Das of Sakhawar.



[77] Wrongly called Vangamani by H P Sastri. Vide, Catalogue I, 527.

[78] The **ms** is in possession of Dr J K Misra of the Allahabad University.

[79] Krishnamachariar, op. cit., p. 344; Singh, op. cit., p. 180.

[80] Govinda Jha, the dramatist, referred to above.

[81] It was published by the Raj Press in 1933. Another edition was brought out from Muzaffarpur by Sri Bhubaneshwar Singh Bhuvan.

[82] The event reminds us of the bee episode in Kalidasa's '**Sakuntalam**'.

[83] It seems that **Kapalika**, as a sect, continued at least up to the 17th century AD.

[84] It is a published work. It was published from Bombay in 1936; Cf. JAOS – XXV, 197-230.

[85] For other works of Harihara, see Aufrecht, Vol I, 762; Singh, op. cit., 134. The Bombay edition of the BN has to say as follows about Harihara – अत्रहरिहरोपाध्यायो मिथिला देशे कदा समुत्पन्न इतिन निश्चीयते एतत्प्रणीतस्यास्य भर्तृहरिनिर्वेदनाम्नो नाटकस्यैकम् ...., p. I fn-1.

[86] Krishnamachariar, op. cit., p. 317. Cf. Keith, 'Sanskrit Literature', p. 248.

[87] Jayaswal, 'Catalogue II', p. 88, No 84; Cf. CCI, 354; Singh, op. cit., p. 134, says that Harihara, brother of Nilkantha, wrote this drama.

[88] R L Mitra, 'Notices', VII, 159, No 2395.

[89] Is he the same as the author of Harihara **Suktimuktavali**?

[90] My paper, 'Krsnadatta Maithila and His Works' in the JBRS – XLII, Part 2 (included here in the Appendix).

[91] Edited by Miss Nilam Solanki. The edition is defective.

[92] Jayaswal, 'Catalogue', p. 33, No 32; Mitra, 'Notices', VI, 64.

[93] Cf. **Bhagavata**, 4, 25, 26, 28.

[94] Mitra,'Notices', VI, 20, **MSS** No 2000; another **ms** is said to be in possession of Pt Jivanand Thakur of Raj Library, Darbhanga.

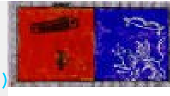
[95] See my paper referred to above.

[96] Jayaswal, 'Catalogue', II, 46, No 42. The end of the **ms**:

देशानां मौलिरत्नं विभवति मिथिला कौशिकी जह्नु कन्या ।

गण्डक्यद्रीन्द्रपादस्थिर रुचिरतरः सीमकीर्तिप्रशस्तिः ।।

रचयति शशिलेखां मैथिलः (कृष्णदत्तः)



[97] Ibid, p. 47 for details.

[98] Ibid, p. 161, No 157. The colophon gives the name of the commentator.

[99] 'History of Tirhut', p. 145.

[100] Ibid. In **Gitagopipati**, Krsnadatta says –

मैथिलकृष्णभणितमितिमाधव चरणयुगमुपनीतम् ।

सखि हे कृष्णमनुपमभासम् ।।

श्रीविद्यापुण्यसिद्धिश्रियमिव दधति श्रीनदीं वाग्मतींच ।

स्वाङकस्यायन्तिवासाभिजनभरतयाः मैथिलाः स्म प्रसिद्धाः ।।

स्वेSभिन्नरुपारूपावपि भिन्नवत् स्थितौ सिता सिताभौ जगदेक पावनौ ।

वृषाकपायीसहितौ वृषाकपीप्सतौ भवेतां मम गङ्गयानया ।

मातापुण्ययशस्वती भगवती देवी भवेशः पिता

सन्तोयस्य पुरन्दरः कुलपतिः श्रीमानिकण्ठात्मजः ।

तेने मैथिल कृष्णदत्तकविना तेनेहगंगाभिधा

टीकाया लहरी समाप्ति मगमत्तस्यामियं द्वादशी ।।

[101] Krishnamachariar, op. cit., p. 661.

[102] There have been two Lalakavis in Mithila.

[103] The drama is unpublished. Quotations, in this connection, have been taken from Dr J K Misra's 'History of Maithili Literature'.

[104] For details, see **Harsanatha Granthavali** edited by Dr Amaranatha Jha.

[105] Krishnamachariar, op. cit., 655. **Amrtodaya** illustrates the ills of **Samsara**. Even this dramatist does not find a place in the '**History of Maithili Literature**', possibly because he wrote in pure Sanskrit. We do not know anything definitely about him. He is said to have belonged to Mangrouni (Darbhanga). He was the son of Umadevi and Pitambara. He was a versatile genius. He flourished in the 18th-19th century. He is associated with the court of Maharaja Raghava Simha of Darbhanga.

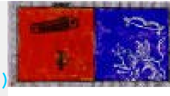
[106] He was a ruler of Garhwala. For **Amrtodaya**, see 'Nepal Catalogue', I, 47. For **Ekavali**, see Jayaswal, 'Catalogue', II, p. 1, No 1.

[107] H P Sastri, 'Catalogue of Nepal MSS', p. 272. For **Srihastamuktavali**, Cf. Jayaswal, 'Catalogue', II, p. 170, No 165.

[108] Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 63, No 60. The book has since been published from Nepal.

[109] It is in possession of Sri Dhirananda Sarma of the Mithila Research Institute, Darbhanga.

CHAPTER XXI: CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MITHILA



[1] S K Chatterji, 'Kiratajanakirti', Calcutta, 1950, p. 151; Cf. Kasten Ronnow, 'Kirata' in 'Le Monde Oriental', Vol XXX, 1936, Upassala, pp. 60-169 quoted in Chatterji's work; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Vratyas in Ancient India', Benares, 1964.

[2] **Vaj-Samhita** – XXX.16; **Taitt Brahm** – III.4, 12, 1; **Sabhaparva**, 26-32.

[3] **AV** – X.4, 14.

[4] Manu – X.44.

[5] मिथिला, तैरभुक्तिश्च, वैदेही, नैमिकाननम् ।

ज्ञानशीलं, कृपापीठं, स्वर्णलांगल, पद्धैतिः ।।

जानकी जन्मभुमिश्च, निरपेक्षा, विकल्मषा ।

रामानंदकटी, विश्वभावनी, नित्यमंगलाः ।।

इति द्वादश नामानि मिथिलायाः ।।

[6] P V Kane, 'History of Dharmasastra', II (I), p. 14 ff. We learn from a verse in the **Yajnavalkyasmriti** that the path of duty was revealed by the sage of Mithila (Yajnavalkya) in that country in which the black antilope roams about.

[7] IC – VII, 2.

[8] Grierson (edited) **LSI** – V (II), p. 4; **Gitavidyakatha** of the **Purusa-pariksa** of Vidyapati – अहो तीरभुक्तीयाः स्वभावाद् गुणगर्विणः भवन्ति ।

[9] MMC – II; PAIOC – XII, 310-325.

[10] साते भवतु सुप्रीता देवी शिखरवासिनी ।

उग्रेण तपसा लव्धो ययाः पशुपतिः पति ।।

[11] **Mundakopanisad** – 1.1.5: "The lower knowledge is the **Rkveda**, **Yajurveda**, **Samaveda** & **Atharvaveda** ....but the higher knowledge is that by which the indestructible is apprehended (**Brahman**)."

[12] **Chand. Upn.** – IV.2.3; VII; **Panch. Brh.** – XII.12.6; Also Cf. **Sat. Brh.** – XI, 6.2.1.

[13] **Sat. Brh.** – xiv.6.1-4; **Brh. Upn.** – III.5.

[14] CHI – I, p. 63. It should be noted here that the Upanisads laid stress on knowledge as the means of salvation.

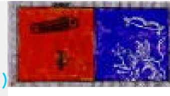
[15] **Brh. Upn.**

[16] **Sat-Brh** – III.1.2.21.

[17] Upendra Thakur, 'History of Mithila', p. 105.

[18] CHI – I, 221.

[19] JBRS – XLVIII (Parts 1-4).



[20] R K Choudhary, 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati', Varanasi, 1976. राधाकृष्ण चौधरी, 'शारान्तिधा', कलकत्ता, 1969 for an enunciation of the concept of 'Lotus'.

[21] i) टुटइतने टुटे प्रेम अद्भुत, जैसे बढ़ै मृणालक सूत ।

ii) लखल ललित तसु गात रे, मन भेल परसिय **सरसिज** पात रे ।

iii) नहिं नहिं करए नयन ढर नोर, काँच**कमल** भँवरा झीकझोर ।

iv) मधुरी फुलल **कमल** संसर्ग ।

v) धवल **कमल** फुल पुरहर भेल ।

vi) कनक **कमल** जनि फरि गेल मोती ।

vii) चपले झाँपल जनि जलधर **नील उत्पल** चंद ।

viii) सिन्दुर मंडित **पंकज** पाता ।

[22] R K Choudhary, 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati' for details.

[23] Ganganatha Jha, 'Purvamimamsa and its Source'; Cf. S N Dasgupta, 'History of Indian Philosophy', II, 87-98.

[24] Upendra Thakur, 'Studies in Jainism and Buddhism in Mithila', p. 69. Cf. S N Dasgupta, op. cit., I, 418; II, 108; R K Choudhary, 'The University of Vikramasila'.

[25] B B Varma, 'Maithila Karana Kayasthaka Panjika Surveksana', 1973, pp. 130-131. Cf. **Parichaya-Pata** published by Bombay Karanagosthi, 1969, article by Narendranatha Dasa.

[26] S Jha, 'The Songs of Vidyapati', Introduction, p. 65. Cf. R K Choudhary, 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati'; 'Vidyapati's Faith', JBORS – III, pp. 9-10 (included in this Volume); **Krtyaratnakara**, verse 1-2.

[27] R K Choudhary, 'Select Inscriptions of Bihar', p. 124.

[28] **Our Heritage**, Calcutta, X, Parts 1 & 2.

[29] Cf. 'Indian Society: Historical Probings' – my article on Mithila in that Volume (that article has since been included in this Volume). Here it should be noted that the study of the **Smritis** and **Nibandha** was encouraged by the state as it served their class interest.

[30] **Gilgit MSS**, Vol 3, Part II, p. 134.

[31] **Jataka** – VI, p. 43; According to Gilgit MSS and the **Tibetan Dulva**, there was class division in Vaisali based on wealth.

[32] ललिता विभासी तदनुभैख्य हिरानि बरारी च ।

गोपीवल्लभ गुजरी रामकली कापिशारङ्गी ।।

कौशिक कोड़ाराख्यौ वसन्तो धनछी तथा ।

असावरी च श्री रागो गौड़ा मालवा मालवौ ।।

भूपाली राज विजय नाटाः कामोद देशारवौ ।

केदारोऽथ मलारी इत्येते मैथिलाः कथिताः ।।

[33] R K Choudhary, 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati'; Cf. Rajeswara Jha, 'Mithilaksara Ka Utpati O Vikasa'.

[34] Quotations from Maithila Karana Kayastha Panji:

Varma (192-93): आदौ कर्न्नकुलात भवश्य कथितौ वंशौ वलायिनिर्म्महल ।। पश्चाति बरैल एवँ वंश कतितौ । कोठीपाल सुयोग्य जाति सीसववंश नितिनिपुणा प्र. नरङ्गवालीतिख वंशो बतीकवाल मोहिनी माड़ीछ योग्य श्री केउँटी ओए वसन्तपुर नित निपुन ....

(194): पोषराम सँ बीजी विष्णुदास ठक्कुर ए सुतो देवठक्कुर ए सुतो त्रिपुरठक्कुर ए सुतो धर्मदास ठक्कुर ए सुतो गंगाधर ठक्कुर ....तत्र चण्डेश्व सुत गणेश सहोदर महेश ठक्कुर सुताः उ बाढू ठक्कुर कुठायिठक्कुर श्रीनाथठक्कुर काः श्रीनाथ ठक्कुर सुतः लोकनाथ ठक्कुर तत सुतौ मटुकमणिठक्कुर सुतौ बाढुठक्कुर मधुसुदनठक्कुरौ चकेसरि पाल सँ सानंद सुत हरिहर दौ रेणुका प्रसिद्धानाथो देविपुतौ सुता कमलावती कुमुदिनी विद्यावती लक्ष्मिनी सत्यावती सोहागमणि कर्पूरा वतिकाः .....

(184): **बीअरक डेरावली ओ शाखा** – बीअर बीर मढ़ौनावासी रूप शिवहि क्योटी

जीवनाथ दड़िमा के वासी रह जद्दूविशनाथपट्टी ।।

भवनाथ रनवे डेरा किन्ह लखमी ककरौर गाम ।

मधुसूदन आहिलवासी बरहेता श्रीराम ।

पलटुदास रतनपुरवासी भच्छी वस रजदेव ।

बैगनी गंगाधर डेरा करी गलाम वस हरिदेव ।।

बलि तारालाही वासी हरिकेशव कटुआधाम ।

उधव बहादुरपुर डेरा खराजपुर श्री काम ।।

APPENDIX 1: A RARE SURYA IMAGE FROM BARAUNI

[1] G N Rao, 'Hindu Iconography', I, 311-12.

[2] V S Agrawala, 'Gupta Art', p. 10.

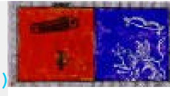
[3] PIHC, 1950, p. 160 ff.

[4] IA, 1925, p. 161 ff; Cf. J N Banerji, 'Development of Hindu Iconography', Calcutta, 1950.

[5] **Matsyapurana**, 6.34; 150-52; 261.7; **Brahmanda**, III.7.29; **Visnu**, 1.21.18; **Bhagavata**, V. 21.15-16; **Vayu**, 28.32; **Brahmanda**, II.11.37; I.19.11.

[6] V A Smith, 'A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon', Oxford, 1930, p. 123.

[7] ASI-AR, 1911-12; Plate LXXII – Rajaon.



APPENDIX 3: A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE LAKSMANASAMVAT

[1] 'Biography of Dharmaswamin', edited by G Roerich, Patna, 1959, p. xvii.

[2] General President's speech at the Delhi session of the Indian History Congress, 1961.

[3] JBRS – XLII, 78 ff.

[4] 'Banglara Itihasa' (2nd edition), pp. 148 ff.

[5] 'Prachin Lipimala' (2nd edition), pp. 148 ff.

[6] IA, 1899, p. 57; Cf. Dvija, 1899, pp. 185-86.

[7] JASB (NS) – XI, p. 418.

[8] JBORS – XX, 20 ff; Cf. Grierson, 'Introduction', xi ff.

[9] S Jha, 'The Songs of Vidyapati', Introduction, p. 29 ff.

[10] Ibid, 27 ff.

[11] PASB, 1885.

[12] H P Sastri, 'Kirtilata', Introduction, 27.

[13] 'Vidyapatipadavali' (2nd edition), p. 12 (nivedana).

[14] R C Mazumdar (edited), 'History of Bengal', Vol I, p. 233.

[15] Ibid, 235.

[16] JASB (NS) – XVII, 9-10; IHQ – VI, 166-167; IA, 1881, pp. 341 ff; IHQ – XIV, 741 ff.

[17] JBRS – XLII, 78 ff.

[18] IHQ – XXXIV, 22.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid, p. 25; Cf. EI – XXX, 82.

[21] S Jha, op. cit., 37.

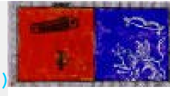
[21a] PIHRC – XVIII, 87; D C Sircar's article on Sanskrit-Maithili Document.

[22] S Jha, op. cit., 37.

[23] L Petech, 'Medieval History of Nepal', Rome, 1958, pp. 197-98; Cf. IC – II, 579-584; IHQ – XXX, 133-147.

[24] 'Biography of Dharmaswamin', xvii.

[25] IHQ – XXXIV, 21 ff.



[26] EI – XXX, 82; IHQ – XXXIV, 22; IB – III, 111; EI – XXVI; CIB, 102; EI – XII, 28-29; IA – XLVIII, 47.

[27] IHQ – XXXIV, 22.

[28] IB – III, 88, 97, 103, 116, 171-172.

[29] R K Choudhary, 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati', Introduction; Cf. D C Sircar, 'Some Epigraphical Records of the Medieval Period from Eastern India', p. 40 ff. The study period of this era oscillates between AD 1108-9 and 1119-20.

APPENDIX 4: KRISNADATTA MAITHILA AND HIS WORKS

[1] Nanyadeva, the king of Mithila (1097-1145), was one of the greatest writers on Dramaturgy.

[2] **Puranjanacharita** edited by Miss Nilam Solanki, M A, Charotar Book Stall, Anand (WR), India, 1955. Vallabh Vidyanagar, Series No 30.

[3] Solanki, op. cit., ii.

[4] This manuscript is in the possession of Pt Jivanand Thakur of Raj Library, Darbhanga. My reading of the text is based on the manuscript.

[5] R L Mitra, 'Notices', VI, p. 20, MSS No 2000.

[6] A B Keith, 'Sanskrit Drama', pp. 251 ff.

[7] Krishnamachariar, 'History of Classical Sanskrit Literature', p. 661.

[8] K P Jayaswal, 'Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in Mithila', Vol II, P. II, p. 33; No 32. Two mss of this work are known in Bihar: one deposited in the **Bihar Research Society**, Patna, and the other in **Raj Library**, Darbhanga. Cf. Mitra, 'Notices', VI, p. 64.

[9] CCI – I, 339; Peterson's 'Reports' – IV, XXI; Schyuler, **Bibl**. 63; Mitra, 'Notices', VI, 20.

[10] Place of deposit – Pandit Harshanath Jha, Sardapur, Ujana, PO Madhepur (Darbhanga).

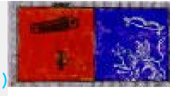
APPENDIX 5: CHINA, TIBET, NEPAL & THE CAPITAL OF TIRABHUKTI (647-702 AD)

[1] i) S N Singh, 'History of Tirhut'; ii) R K Choudhary, 'History of Bihar'; iii) Upendra Thakur, 'History of Mithila'; iv) 'Comprehensive History of Bihar', edited by B P Sinha, my article on North Bihar, Chapter XXXV; v) R C Mazumdar: (a) 'Ancient Bengal', (b) 'History of Bengal' (ed.); vi) Yogendra Mishra's printed speech at G D College, Begusarai on 22.4. 1976 regarding Svetapur as the Capital of Mithila and other articles published in **Dinaman** (Hindi Weekly); vii) D Devahuti, 'Harsha: A Political Biography'; viii) D R Regmi, 'Ancient Nepal'; and ix) 'The Life of Hiuentsang' by Hui Li (translated by Beal). The recent publication of 'Svetapur and Arunasva' does not necessitate any mention in my view.

[2] N C Sen, 'Accounts of India and Kashmir in the Dynastic Histories of the Tang Period' (Santiniketan, 1968), p. 3 ff.

[3] Ibid, 4.

[4] Ibid, 5.



[5] Beal, BRWW – I, Intr. 16, 91; Cf. R K Choudhary, 'The Huna Invasion of India' in the Altekar Commemoration Volume.

[6] K M Pannikar, 'Sri Harsa of Kanauja', p. 34.

[7] Dinaman, Nov 6, 1977 & also 30th Oct, 1977.

[8] S Jha, 1976.

[9] J P Sharma, 'Republics in Ancient India', Leiden, 1968.

[10] JAOR, 1911, 37 ff and 53 ff.

[11] 'Harsa', p. 210.

[12] P C Bagchi, 'Sini-Indian Studies', I.68; Hui Li, 'The life of Hiuentsang', p. 156 (Beal's edition).

[13] Devahuti, 228.

[14] EHI, 366-67; HMHD, I. 334-35. Vaidya equates CHA (TU) POHOLO with Tirhut and the river CHIEN-TO-WEI with river Bagmati. Both Smith and Vaidya are nearer the truth than other writers. There is a strong tradition in Mithila that the Tibetans had played havoc in Tirhut since Amaravati was in ascendance. Tirhut rivers originate in Nepal.

[14a] R K Choudhary, 'History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut', 'Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati' for details.

[15] Petech, 'A Study of the Chronicles of Ladakh'; Cf. Levi, 'Le Nepal', II, 148 fn-1; JA – IX, 297 ff; 401 ff. Joseph Needham, 'Science and Civilisation in China', I, 317.

[16] JASB (Letters) – XIX, 1953, p. 43.

[17] R K Choudhary, 'Select Inscriptions of Bihar'.

[18] P C Bagchi, 'India and China' (N Y, 1951), pp. 15-20.

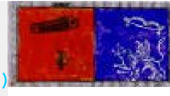
[19] People's China, May, 1956.

[20] D R Regmi, 'Ancient Nepal', Calcutta, 1960, p. 158, 182 etc.

[21] The well-known route between Nepal and Tibet are:

i. Kuti – Kathmandu – Hetaura – Bichakhori – Garhparsa lie on the trade route to Patan from Lhasa. It takes six days from Kuti to Kathmandu and there are various trade outposts between the valley and Lhasa.
ii. Banepa – Dhulikhel – Palanchok due north catching the course of Bhutia Kosi reaching Nesti and Kodari. Banepa permitted unhampered trade to Bhatagaon.
iii. Journey from Kathmandu to Hetaura took five days. It was a regular thoroughfare in 1793 when Kirpatrick passed through this route through Chandragiri, Chitalang, Bhimaphedi, Bhainse, Hetaura, Bichakhori.

There was another pass through Khokhna and then through the bed of the river Bagmati for sometimes down to Makwanpur. According to Georgi and More one crosses the territory of the Mughal at **Barrihua** (**Bhaptiahi** in the



north-eastern rail section (Cf. my 'History of Muslim rule in Tirhut' and also **Muzaffaranama** translated by Sir Jadunath) to the kingdom of Makwanpur. There was a dense forest and malaria (Levi – I, 120). The Makwanpur-Khokhna route was followed by Dessideri in 1722. The link through Sindhuligarh took to Mahottari through Tinpatan to Janakpur and thence to the Indian border. The Tibetan party who came to escort Atisa Dipamkara from Vikramasila must have followed either the Makwanpur route or the Sindhuligarh route because the party reached the bank of the Ganges straitway (opposite the University) and crossed over to the University. This shows that they followed the traditional Tirhut route up to Kursela on the north bank of the Ganges and crossed over to the University on the other side. Haji Ilyas of Bengal in the 14th century AD entered Nepal via Darbhanga through Janakpur-Sindhuligarh route as it was difficult to go through Purnea, and left Nepal by way of the river Bagmati. There is another route from U P side. Another trade route was from Palpa to Gorakhpur. It took nine days from Palpa to reach the frontiers of Tibet.

[22] JASB (Letters) – XVI, 194.

[23] Devahuti, p. 228. She has not been able to decipher correctly the Indian equivalents of the Chinese names of rivers and places so far though she deserves credit for bringing to light so many Chinese sources hitherto unknown to scholars.

[24] BRWW – II, 77 fn 100; The word **FO-SHI-LI** (Vrjji) does not occur in the 'Life of Hiuentsang' translated by Beal. One wonders if the pilgrim actually visited the Vrjji country.

[25] R K Choudhary, 'Govindagupta'.

[26] Needham, 'Science and Civilisation in China', I.

[27] Narayan Chandra Sen, 'Accounts of India and Kashmir in the Dynastic Histories of the Tang Period', Santiniketan, 1968. It contains both the Chinese and English versions of the Wang episode. Tang dynasty ruled China between AD 618 – 907.

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